"WAYSIDE"

EDWARD ALLEN

Class PZ3

Book .H14345

Copyright No. W

COPYRIGHT DEPOSIT.

"WAYSIDE"

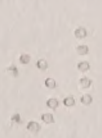
THE WAKING DREAM OF A SOUL BEFORE AN OPEN WOOD FIRE

BY

EDWARD ALLEN Hall

BOSTON
SHERMAN, FRENCH & COMPANY
1914

PZ3
.H14345
W



Copyright, 1914
Sherman, French & Company

$1.00
NOV -6 1914

©CLA388266
No 1

TO

THE "ONLY GIRL"—A MEMORY

INTRODUCTION

An old colonial mansion upon an eminence, surrounded by a forest of giant oaks, towering elms, and graceful hickories. A long, broad, spacious room in that mansion, fronting the east and south. A huge old-fashioned fireplace in which blazes and flashes a fire of seasoned logs. An easy chair before the fire in which is seated a man with hair like the driven snow. An open Bible is upon his knee, in which he has been reading the story of Sinai. The old man stops reading to rest his eyes, and the white head lies back against the cushioned chair, and with closed eyes his thoughts are busy with the story which he has read.

Suddenly he is climbing a mountain slope alone. Up and up he goes steadily, to find upon that mountain top he knows not what, but still something draws him on. At last the summit is reached and he stands alone with uncovered head in the presence of his conscience and his God. He looks around him and beholds no Being, but he feels a Presence there, and some inner sense tells him he is upon holy ground.

Before him is a bush gleaming red like fire, with the beautiful carmine of the autumn days, and

around him are other plants and bushes and trees, glorious in their coloring of crimson and purple and gold. He listens, but no voice comes to him audibly; only from somewhere, everywhere, there comes to his senses, now curiously alert, a message which needs no spoken words to carry it. He lifts his eyes in worship of the Presence which fills the place, and to his soul comes this message, clear and plain and unmistakable.

"O Soul, be still and learn, for you are now in the presence of your Creator, the Power which made and governs all things. I am the Spirit of the ages gone, and of the eternity which is to come. I am Creator, and Ruler, and the Moving Force of the universe. I am the Mental Force which holds the worlds in the hollow of its hand. I am the Everlasting Arms, and the hope of every human soul. I am the divine Mental Consciousness of time and eternity, a part of which you are; and in me, and through me, and because of me, you live and move and have your being. Your spirit is a part of me; I am the Father and you are my child, created of me and destined to grow into my image, an individual personality which is a part of the Great Personality of the universe.

"Behold, I give you the commandments of life; and if you understand them and obey them, life and peace will be yours for everlasting. Through me you will reach an eternity of existence in peace and happiness, even as I am. These are the com-

mandments which I give unto you, and I demand obedience to them continuously.

" *Think rightly.* This is the first and greatest commandment; for upon this depends all others. Guide your thoughts in ways of love and purity, and into harmony with the All-Good.

"*Live rightly.* This is the second great commandment, for upon the keeping of this command rests your destiny and your chances for eternal life.

" These two commandments are the sum and substance of immortal happiness, and upon their strict observance depends life everlasting. Embodied in these two great commands are many others, each necessary to be obeyed of itself, but each a part of these two great commandments.

" Thou shalt work, for in labor, both physical and mental, lies the secret of growth and development.

" Thou shalt be earnest, for only in earnest and honest effort and striving can progress be made in the physical life.

" Thou shalt be brave, for where fear enters, there happiness cannot dwell.

" Thou shalt be loving, for love is the pathway to eternal life, and there is no other.

" Thou shalt be clean, for no unclean thing shall enter the Kingdom of God.

" Thou shalt be well, for in health only is happiness, and happiness is the gateway through which all who reach eternal life must enter.

"Thou shalt worship no other God but Good, for only in good and happiness and purity and health lies the way to salvation of human souls.

"Behold, by the operation of my beneficent laws I have given you a physical body for your use and habitation, while gaining the physical life experience necessary to the making of a soul. Take good care, then, of this beautiful habitation, the gift of thy Creator. Preserve it, and watch over it. Study the laws which govern it and obey them, for no clean soul inhabits an unclean body, and no saved soul dwells in a physical body defiled or self-abused.

"Behold, I have placed all things necessary to thy salvation within thy own reach, and all my laws are within thy comprehension, which are necessary for eternal life. If thou wilt search them out and obey them, the reward of immortal happiness shall be thine."

The vision fades, and the old man raises his head. The Bible has fallen to the floor, and he places it again upon the table. Then, rising, he lifts his face and his heart toward the invisible Presence which he feels was just now with him, and makes again a firm resolve to so live,— fearlessly, happily, honestly, cleanly, and worthily, — that he shall at last stand eternally in that kingdom where the Spirit of Good forever dwells.

Somewhere in the great world to-day there lives some one in whose mentality I will be able to strike

with this story an answering harmonious chord, and that person will read and understand and enjoy this tale which I am about to relate. My hope is that there may be many such readers, but that there will be at least one I am positive and sure. I think that one who will appreciate most fully will be a girl, and I picture her as a dainty little lady with deep wide brown eyes, and luxuriant brown hair, bearing in certain lights a hint of gold, as if the sunshine had kissed it in benediction. I picture my one best reader thus because my soul holds in its inmost depths the image of just such a girl, beautiful, sympathetic, friendly, who was my wife for twenty happy years. She would have read this book, I know, and would have called it good. So, aided by the memory of the girl that really was, and cheered by the image of the girl that somewhere is, I will endeavor to tell the story of this soul which is still young because it will be ages in the making, for it will endure and grow ceaselessly in the eternity which lies before it.

I picture this one best beloved reader as young, just entering into womanhood, and married to the man whom she adores. Yesterday was the first anniversary of their marriage, and the manly boy-husband fortunately remembers just as he leaves the office where he works, that this day is their wedding anniversary, and he resolves to take her a little gift to show that he has not forgotten that which has been the uppermost thought in her

mind all day, and knowing that she values best of all gifts a book, he enters a book store to make a selection.

"I want a little gift book for a lady," he tells the girl behind the counter, and she, in quick appreciation, places before him book after book, with covers done in beautiful design and leaves filled with sentimental selections, and embellished with many pictures. The wealth of assortment confuses him, and he hesitates about making a choice. At last the girl drags out of an obscure corner, where it has been almost smothered beneath volumes of more pretentions, this little modest book.

"Maybe she would like this," she says; and as something in the title or the text strikes his fancy, he suddenly decides to take it, and he bears it home and places it beside her plate at the dinner table.

That was yesterday, and to-day she is reading the little book with shining eyes because of thoughts of the giver. It is a fair October day with just a touch of autumn keenness in the air, and a blazing wood fire is burning in the generous grate to take the "chill" off the room. I see her draw a long cushioned seat before the fire, and with the great south window at her back, settle down to read. In imagination I sit down beside her and watch the fascinating changes upon her face as she reads. Here a smile curves the corners of her mouth, and the enticing dimples show

for a moment in her cheeks. Now a sober light comes into her eyes, and the dimples fade away. Anon her sweet lips quiver, and, as I live, tears, great tears, fill her beautiful eyes and slowly roll down upon her cheeks. Quickly she dashes them away, and glances apprehensively in my direction, as though she sensed a presence which her physical vision could not see. Reassured by the seeming absence of observers, she smiles again, a faint phantom of a smile, and continues her reading. So the hours pass quickly and unwearingly, and the light is beginning to grow dim, when the door suddenly opens and her handsome boy-husband enters the room and sits down beside her, exactly in the place where I am sitting. But he does not see me either, and totally oblivious of my presence, he puts his arm around her and she lays aside the book and rests her head upon his shoulder. What happens then causes my heart to wince and my pulse to quicken, as I remember when I, too, held a wife like that in my loving arms, and felt the glory of a love returned.

"Do you like the book, Evelyn?" he said.

"Oh, yes, Scott; I like it very much. It is beautiful."

Witness now, you mollusk, who threw down this same book in disgust a moment ago, finding nothing in it. This dainty little lady, whose discernment is worth a dozen such as yours, likes it very much and calls it "beautiful." Now, what do I care if the ninety and nine will have none of it, so

long as this dear one-hundredth reader "likes it very much." Thus you multitude of unappreciative and undiscriminating common souls may cast the book aside or ignore it, if it suits you, for here is my reward in the pleasure of this delightful mental entity, this dear little lady Evelyn, for whom I write and in whom I can confide.

To you, then, my Beloved, the creation of my imagination, but the image of the girl who was and the dream of the girl who now is somewhere, as I verily believe, I will address myself, and let the rest of the world find such precarious enjoyment as they may in other things.

First of all, then, Evelyn, I will tell you something of this soul with whom you are to sympathize and with whom you are to smile, I hope, and be glad, and with whom and for whom the tears, perhaps, may come into your beautiful eyes sometimes as you read this life story in the little book which you nevertheless "like very much." My name is John McLain, though you may call me "Jack" if you like, for so some who love me do, and I am living to-day, as I write, in the house where I was born some sixty years ago. The house was built of solid masonry and great timbers of living oak, in the days when timber was abundant and lumber was cheap, and the great oak beams of its mighty frame have grown, in these passing years, as hard as iron, and the old house stands as solid to-day, to all appearance, as the day when my father finished it the year be-

fore I was born. My father's farm consisted of three hundred and twenty acres, forty acres of which, surrounding and adjoining the house, was, and still is, heavily timbered. The house stands back from the highway some three hundred feet, upon a ridge sloping down to the road in front, and back to a beautiful little lake covering about one hundred acres, which forms a part of the farm boundary upon the north. The house was a mansion in the days when it was built, standing two full stories and a generous half in height, and is flanked by broad verandas to the east and west. The highway, along which a trolley line runs in these later days, leads from the great city twenty miles to the north, into and past a little village one mile to the south, and so on indefinitely, through the country to other towns beyond. Upon one of the great posts which mark the gateway of the entrance drive in front is a name plate bearing the one word "Wayside," which is the name my young wife christened the place when she first came here to live. Here I was born, and here I lived until, tiring of the unbending rule of my father, I left home one summer night when I was but a boy of eighteen, and here my father lived and died, being to the last a firm, unyielding Puritan, with an unswerving faith in a literal burning lake of fire and brimstone, and the existence of a terrible and Calvinistic God of wrath. Here my gentle, sweet-faced mother lived her patient, uncomplaining life of self-denial and usefulness, rais-

ing her family of three sons and one daughter, to see them drift away from the old home one after another,— the sons to settle in other states, the daughter to elope with an actor who took her to England. Here I came back just before the death of my father to take up my life and to occupy again the room which I had left so suddenly long years before, and here I had brought my beautiful young wife one year after my father's death, and here my mother received her into a loving companionship which was not marred by unkind word or unpleasant look so long as my mother lived, and here my mother passed away the next year after my marriage. Here my darling baby daughter was born, and here, five years later, her soul passed into the Great Silence, to be followed a few years later by her mother, my perfect wife, leaving me desolate and undone.

Here there come to me often old friends and true, chief among them being two who were school comrades and playmates of my boyhood days — Robert Manning, who became a Presbyterian minister in the city, and who during the first years of his ministry preached the funeral sermons of my father and my mother, and later read the beautiful service of the church over the cold and silent bodies of my child and the dear wife whom I so loved; the other is Charles Scott, a physician in the city, who has been my family doctor through all the years of his practice. He was at the bedside of my parents in their last illness; he it was

who did all that mortal man could do to save the life of my fever-smitten child; and it was he who met me at the door on that dread day when my wife's drowned body lay stark and silent in the darkened room of my suddenly empty house. Later it was his hand which took mine in friendly clasp, and as I looked with dry and aching eyes into his, which were full of tears of sympathy, he laid his kind hand upon my shoulder and bade me give sorrow voice, for fear the o'erwrought heart might break, or reason totter upon her throne. I walked the floor that night, in my despair and desolation feeling nothing, caring nothing, save my great sorrow; and in the morning this same kind friend took me to her room, the room in which she and the babe had slept, during its short life, and in which it had died. It was a room held sacred to the memory of that dear young soul, and drawing the curtains aside, he let in the glorious sun of that summer day, and around me were the child's toys and playthings. There were pictures of the child and her mother upon the walls, and lying across the foot of the bed were the clothes which she had worn upon that last day in life, and the hat which she had swung by its ribbon in her hand when she went down the path with me that last morning to the car, and had kissed me good-bye and Godspeed as the car came in sight around the turn in the road. Suddenly I knelt down upon the floor by the bed with my arms across the dress which she

had worn, and the fountains of my great grief were opened up and the hot tears fell from my eyes like rain. My friend wisely left me so, and in that room with its sacred memories I fought my bitter fight, and kind nature won at last, and I slept the sleep of utter exhaustion, lying prone across the bed where she had slept with the child, — years ago or yesterday, I had forgotten which.

Now my wife has been gone ten years, and again the old house resounds to the laughter and music of young voices, for I had remodeled the house after my mother's death, putting in water and heating systems, and finishing off the upper story into a ballroom where our friends often gathered to make merry. Sometimes now, when a party of my young friends wish to have a quiet dancing party, I let them come here, for I know that she would wish it so, and I have arrived at a view of life which has brought me consolation and a happiness which I did not at one time consider possible. These young friends of mine have taught me that life is still good to live, and while I never will quite see the old happiness back again, still I am finding a new happiness and enjoyment which has again grown very dear to me.

The same broad fireplace is at one end of the great living-room, and here my friends, young and old, sit with me in the days or evenings when a "fire feels good," and upon the wide western veranda when the weather is warm enough to make that more pleasant. I am head accountant in a

great manufacturing plant in the city, as I have been for many years, and go daily to my work by the cars which pass the door. My two brothers still live in a western city, both of them married and prosperous, and the old homestead now belongs to me alone.

This all by way of introduction, Little Lady of my waking dream, so now you know who it is that talks to you.

CHAPTER I

It is October and the evening air is cold enough to make a little fire a very pleasant thing. I have brought Robert Manning and Charles Scott home with me to dinner, and the meal being over, we have adjourned to the living room, where a fire of logs is throwing out a grateful heat into the room. We had settled down for a reminiscent talk, when Charles arose and walked to a picture of my wife which hung upon the wall.

"John," said he (we are John and Charles and Robert to each other, Little Lady, and so we may be to you, if you do not mind), "that is a good picture of your wife."

"Yes," I said, "that is just as she looked the first time I ever saw her. It was a cool breezy day in the early fall, and she was wearing those light furs. She had the picture taken in them that same week."

"Well," said he, "I saw a girl to-day who looked so like her that I was startled. By the way, did you know that Mrs. Wilson had returned?"

"Yes," I said, "and they did not find the body of her daughter who was lost on the yachting cruise somewhere in the South Seas. They do not know exactly where the yacht went down, and

a great deal of time and money has been spent by the friends of those on board to try and recover the bodies."

"It is too bad," said Robert, "for it would be such a satisfaction to give the bodies a Christian burial."

"Yes," I said, "but in my own case I do not attach much importance to where my body finds its last resting place; and as far as I am personally concerned, if I should be lost at sea, or in any other place where my body would be difficult to recover, I would not want my friends to go to a moment's trouble or to any expense to try and recover it. When I leave this body I am through with it, and there is no possibility of my ever wanting it again. It has served its purpose for me, has furnished me a habitation for this life experience, in which to make growth and development, and having done this, I can have no further use for it. Of course, if my friends, wishing to show proper respect to the casket which my soul has used and found good, wish to give it a decent and careful burial, I believe this to be right and proper where possible, but these extraordinary efforts to recover bodies under such circumstances as these we were speaking of do not meet with my very cordial endorsement."

"I hear," said Robert, "that Mrs. Wilson stopped a month in England on her way back."

"Yes," I said; "it seems that a relative of Mr. Wilson's had recently died there, a widower, leav-

ing an only child, a daughter about twenty-four years old, who was supporting herself as governess in an English family. Mrs. Wilson found her by accident, took a fancy to her, and after much difficulty succeeded in persuading her to come home with her, begging her to take the place of this daughter who was drowned. I saw Mrs. Wilson yesterday, and she said they would be out to-night to see me. She mentioned the girl, but there is something about her which she did not tell me, only saying that I would be surprised when I saw her. I suppose she is birthmarked in some way, or possibly a cripple."

Just at this moment came the sound of a motor car stopping outside, and in a moment Edward Wilson, an associate of mine in the manufacturing company, stood in the doorway, and beside him was his wife and a girl who, as she stepped forward into the light and spoke in answer to her aunt's introduction, sent the quick blood from my face and made me stand for a moment, still and speechless.

"How do you do, Mr. McLain?" said the girl, holding out her hand. "I am glad to meet you, for I have heard much about you."

I heard as in a dream, for there before me stood my wife, my dear, young, beautiful wife, just as she had stood upon that day long years ago when she had been introduced to me on the deck of a Mississippi River steamboat, and she was dressed now as she was then,— the same furs, the

same becoming hat, the same dress, and not only that, but it was my wife's voice which spoke to me, and the same words she uttered. For the instant I stood in amazement; then, "My dear, my dear," I said, taking hold of her hand, "come here and see this picture," and I led her before the picture of my wife. "Have I dreamed all these years, or am I dreaming now?"

"No," she said, "you are not dreaming. I am just Kate Wilson, but my aunt has told me how much I resemble your wife. Is that why you wanted me to dress in this way, Aunt Rachel?"

"Yes," said Mrs. Wilson, "I wanted the picture to be complete. I told you, John, that you would be surprised."

"I am not so surprised at the physical likeness," I said, "although that is remarkable enough, but that the voice should be so like my wife's. I would have recognized it instantly, even though I had not seen the speaker."

"It is a well known fact," said Charles, "that certain voices have for certain persons a peculiar fascination. They strike some chord in their consciousness which vibrates in harmony, and I have sometimes wondered if the tones did not awaken a sleeping memory in the subconscious mentality of something beyond and before the present physical life."

"It has always been so with me," I said. "Did I ever tell you the story of how I first met and was attracted to my wife? It was during the

last years of my residence in the West and I was taking a trip from Saint Louis to Saint Paul on a Mississippi River steamboat of the Diamond Jo Line. The evening after leaving Saint Louis I was standing at the stern of the boat, watching the sun disappear in glory behind the gold and crimson of the western clouds. The whole sky was flecked with clouds, through which, and upon which the low-lying sun was sending its brilliant rays, making a picture grand and imposing beyond my power to describe. Suddenly a voice spoke close to me. 'Are they not beautiful?' it said; and turning quickly I looked straight into the loveliest deep-brown eyes which I had ever seen.

"'The most beautiful in the world,' I said, and with a blush the owner of the eyes stepped a little closer to the captain, to whom she had spoken, and not to me. As the captain and I were friends, he at once introduced us, and offering me her hand, the girl said, just as you said now, my dear,

"'I am glad to meet you, for I have heard much about you.'

"The tones of her voice thrilled me as by an electric shock, and seemed to arouse in my consciousness a faint, dim sense of remembrance, as though the tones were familiar to me, and yet I someway knew that I had not heard the voice before in this life. I was fascinated by the mellow, silvery music of it as much as by the beauty of the girl who owned it. It is needless to say that I

made the most of my opportunities, and it developed in our conversation that the girl's home was just across the lake here from my own home, that she knew my mother and had heard much about me before coming to Saint Louis on a visit to friends. Her parents had bought the farm on the opposite side of the lake and moved there after I had left home.

"That night when I went to my stateroom I tried my best to remember where I had heard that voice before, but in vain; and finally I fell asleep and dreamed a dream, so real and so wild, but still so loving and so tender, that its vivid recollection cast its influence over me for many days.

"I stood in the forest glades of old, in that dim day when might made right and force made law, and by my side stood a girl who to my savage eyes seemed beautiful. Straight I stood, and lithe and muscular, and in my hand I held a heavy, knotted war club. The girl spoke, and my whole being answered to that voice. It was the note to which my soul was tuned. Clear as the tone of a flute, mellow as the voice of a trombone, sweet as the sound of the violin, it fell upon my ear with the silvery clearness of a bird's trill.

"'No,' she said, 'I will not go with you, but if you love me as you say you do come with me to the chief, my father, and demand me of him as a man should.'

"'I will go,' I said, 'at once.'

"Together we walked through the forest to the

rude village, and standing before the chief I demanded his daughter for a wife.

"'Will you fight for her?' he said.

"'Aye, that I will,' I answered, 'as I would fight for life or air were these denied me. Bring on my adversary; I am ready.'

"'There are three of my strongest warriors who ask for my daughter's hand. These you must fight, and I will give my daughter to the victor.'

"Oh, the joy of that combat! The first I laid low quickly and easily. The second succumbed at last to my furious fighting, and finally the last and strongest stood before me.

"'Will you rest,' the old chief asked, 'before this last trial?'

"'Rest!' I said, 'I will never rest until I win the girl.'

"And so we fought, this last strong warrior and I, until at last, there in that forest old, I felt my strength giving way, my eyes growing dim, and I was nearly conquered when the girl spoke to me.

"'Kill him, brave heart,' she said. 'He must not win.'

"At the sound of that magical voice my strength returned, the light came back to my fading eyes, and I attacked him with a fury which he could not withstand, and he fell before me. Proudly the girl and I left the village together — and a change came over the nature of my dream.

I stood in a little hut, and upon the floor was stretched the lifeless body of the girl, cold in death. Steadily and long I gazed upon her, and then, raising my clenched hands to Heaven with a cry of anguish upon my lips, I awoke,— to hear the trampling of many feet, the clanking of chains, and loud shouts of command. Quickly I dressed and went out upon the deck, to find the steamboat lying at the wharf of a little city where the company's warehouses were on fire, and the boat's crew were helping to extinguish it. The fire was under control when I reached the deck, and as the morning light was just beginning to streak the east, I did not return to my stateroom, but sat down in a chair upon the deck, and with my mind still full of my curious dream, wondered what this girl had to do with that savage vision of the long ago. For some days I had been reading an Oriental book on the transmigration of souls, and as the idea was new to me I was much interested in it. This, with the strong impression which the girl and her beautiful voice had made upon me, lingered, I suppose, in my consciousness after my waking mind had, partly at least, resigned control, and so came this impossible dream, born of that weird, fantastic philosophy, and the magic of the girl's voice.

"We were a week together upon that trip, a happy, glorious week, and at parting the girl said,

"'You should come back home to live, for your

father is failing fast, and both he and your mother need you there.'

"'I will,' I said; and in a short time I had made arrangements to leave the West and come back home to stay, allured, I must admit, as much by the charming personality of the girl and the music of her beautiful voice as by duty to my parents. And so I came here in the following December to my childhood's home, arriving on Christmas morning, and that same evening I made a call at the white house across the lake to see the girl who was then, and always has been since that time, the 'Only Girl' to me."

"My Aunt Rachel tells me that you are a singer and musician," said Kate, "and this will be an additional bond of interest between us, for I dearly love music."

"My wife was a fine musician," I said, "and she possessed one of the sweetest soprano voices I ever heard, and we derived a great deal of pleasure from our music."

"Kate is also a singer," said Mrs. Wilson, "and when I found her she was devoting all her spare time to music, in the hope to one day make a living by means of it. Now, will you two not play and sing something together? We would very much like to hear you."

Kate seated herself at the piano, and I took up my violin, and I soon found that she was indeed a good musician. As I looked at her, she seemed so like my wife that I could scarcely realize that

I was not back again in those happy days when the "Only Girl" and I played and sang together, and all the world was joy.

Rapt in the music and the allurement of the time, I finally swung into the melody of an old-time love song which was a favorite with my wife, and which she and I had sung together on that last evening of her life, and soon I was singing softly the words of the song, and then Kate joined me with her clear, sweet voice, so like my wife's, making the enchantment complete. When the song was ended and the last lingering note died away, I noticed that Mrs. Wilson was crying softly, and even Robert's eyes were moist, for he was ever a kindly and sympathetic gentleman.

"That was beautiful," said Charles; "and what a gift of the gods music is. I think there is more good in that music of yours than in most of the sermons which will be preached in the churches to-morrow."

As the Wilsons were leaving, I said to them,

"I wish that you would come and see me more often. I am very much alone, and would enjoy it greatly."

"We will," said Mr. Wilson, "and to tell the truth, we would have called here more in the past, but we have both been strict Presbyterians for many years, and we knew your peculiar religious views and your likelihood to speak them at any time, so did not want our faith disturbed nor doubts awakened by your unorthodox remarks."

"Well, I will promise to be good if you will bring Miss Kate along, and we will have music instead of discussion."

After they were gone, Charles said,

"Now there is a wonderful thing. Here are two members of the Presbyterian Church who have grown grey in its service, and have worshipped, we should suppose, intelligently for many years, and yet they are afraid that a few moments' conversation with John here may unsettle their faith and make them doubt. What sort of a tender belief is this which cannot stand criticism nor discussion for a moment? If my faith could not stand against all argument or discussion or contention, I would change it at once for one which could."

"As far as I am personally concerned," I said, "I have no criticism to make of any man's religious belief if it enables him to live a better life, and I seek no controversy over his creed. There is no virtue in belief aside from inducing us to live more nearly in harmony with the good laws of life. Any belief is good which helps us to live cleanly, happily and growingly, and any belief which does not so help us is a vain and worthless thing.

"And I believe fully and implicitly in the value and necessity of existence of the orthodox church and its organization, and the maintenance of religious societies. I am ready to give them any help which may be in my power, and gladly con-

tribute to their support from my substance while I lend them my presence and approval, for the aim and design of the church is to make the world better, and anything which has that end in view has my hearty accord. Religion and worship in its many phases have been civilizing and uplifting agents through the ages, and their influence the world could not do without. The ways and methods of religious bodies have not always been perfect or even commendable, but the end sought has been the betterment of mankind, and of this all honest men must approve. Personally, I could wish that the church would not consider it necessary to cling so closely to ancient superstitions and outgrown fable, but with its evident and manifest intent for good I am most fully in sympathy.

"I am ready to acknowledge the Bible's wonderful power for good in the world, and grant its efficacy to those of simple faith, and to all those who study it honestly and earnestly; yet I believe that eternal salvation does not rest upon a simple credence of authority, but upon personal knowledge and personal mental strength. Every man's salvation is a matter of his own mental development and evolution from the simple and credulous faith to the confident and self-evident knowledge of a personal understanding.

"I believe that the man who worships an idol of clay or wood has started along the path which leads at last to salvation and eternal life. It is

evidence of the cosmic urge to better things, and of the influence of the omnipresent divine Mental upon the individual mentality, which I believe is that organization we call the soul.

"Anything which makes for higher thinking and better living is a good thing, and anything which develops the individual mentality in harmony with the divine mentality is helping to work out the great divine scheme of life."

CHAPTER II

A month has gone past since I talked last to you, Little Lady. Just think of that. Thirty beautiful days slipped away while you were turning the page. How time does fly, to be sure; but it matters not, for there is just as much of it left as ever. I imagine time to be a circle, a wheel, made up of two eternities, and life is co-existent. The wheel turns slowly round, and the process of its turning gradually creates human souls, which grow and develop in this strange machinery. At definite places in the revolving circle is a dense visible physical life, and between these visible physical lives are rests, or places where souls can move more freely, unhampered by the gross physical of the darker places. In these lighter spots the universal light which envelops the great wheel shines through and through the rarified physical, while the darker places are so gross and sleeping that the light cannot fully penetrate; and yet, as each soul passes along its journey, now in the dark, now in the light, gradually the darker places are becoming rarified and filled with light by the influence of these souls' progress, until the end will be that there will be no more darkness, but the whole circle will be full of light.

I have seen Kate many times during this past

month, for she often comes into the office where I busy myself, and twice she and her uncle and aunt have passed the evening with me at "Wayside." We are growing to be very good friends. She calls me "Uncle Jack" at my request, and I call her Kate, and she seems to feel at home at "Wayside," which pleases me very much. To-night she will go home with me to dinner, and her uncle and aunt are to come out later, as also are some other friends, among them Robert and Charles. It seems very proper and appropriate for Kate to be sitting opposite me at the dinner table, and it brings back vividly those days of the long ago, when the "Only Girl" presided there so gracefully. They are very nearly alike, those two, not only in looks but in manners and ways of thinking, and I find myself growing fonder of this girl every day.

"Uncle Jack," said Kate, "I wish that you would tell me about this terrible religious belief of yours, of which my uncle and aunt seem so much afraid. I have been brought up in the Church of England faith, and I know very little of any other."

"Well, Kate, I will tell you something of the confident conclusions at which I have arrived after years of study and careful thought. It is a belief which brings me happiness, and health, and contentment in every day of life.

"First, I believe the physical body of man to be a product of physical evolution, of growth and

development from the primary or single cell. I believe this evolution, this growth and development, to have been made not only possible, but inevitable, because of the omnipresence, the indwelling in all the universe, of an omnipotent and omniscient intelligence, which is a moving force. I believe that coincident with and accompanying this evolution of the physical form, there has ever been an evolution of mind; that individual mentalities have evolved and developed as forms grew more complex and more perfect, until at last a mental form has been created in the invisible mental material which is omnipresent, and which permeates the physical. I believe that the great law of attraction has had much to do with the development of the physical form, and it has had much to do also with the development of the mental form. The mental which permeates the physical form has gradually achieved an organization,—a corporation, a centralized energy, held in union by this law of attraction and affinity, and bound together by the power of a gradually developing memory, a memory of congenial life experience constantly growing stronger until this mental form has become able to persist as an organization by itself, after the disintegration of the visible physical body, long enough to enter another forming physical body and so gain another experience in the physical life. Now, if you think of this continuing mental organization as the soul of man, and the omnipresent mental force or intelligence

as Deity, you will see the point where your belief and mine come together, for we both believe there is a soul and a Deity which created it. If you have caught my meaning thus far, Kate, we had better leave the subject now for you to think over, and mentally digest, and we will take it up again at some future time. However, you will find that I believe the world is good, and that the divine plan is working out perfectly, and has done so without a halt or a hesitation since the beginning."

"I think that I understand you," said Kate, "and I can see nothing very terrible in it. I will study it over in my mind, as you say, and ask you questions about it later. I, myself, believe that people are much better than we give them credit for. They do not like to be driven, but if put upon their honor, few would prove anything but honorable."

"Yes," I said, "my wife held that same opinion also, and after she came here to live she made a trial of her theory. In those days we had many callers at the door for a 'bite to eat' or a place to sleep, and my wife thought it would be a fine thing to build a little lodge down by the gateway, at the roadside, and donate its use to the weary passers-by. So we built a comfortable little house there, containing a fair-sized living room, two bedrooms, a bathroom, and a small kitchen. We furnished the place decently, putting in stoves, cooking utensils, dishes, table and bed linen, with

bedding and everything needful, even to soap and towels. A good well and pump stood conveniently near, and a generous pile of wood was placed at the back door. We left the door unlocked, and put a placard on the outside, telling what the house was for, and inviting any one who chose to use it freely, but requesting care and decency, and we invited those who needed a meal to apply for it at our kitchen door.

"Well, I regret to say that, much to my wife's sorrow, the plan was a failure. The house was shamefully abused,— the furniture broken and destroyed, the dishes, cooking utensils, bedding and linen were stolen and carried away, and our back door was overrun with tramps and vagrants applying for food. At last, after a party of drunken tramps had spent a riotous night there, in which chairs were smashed and windows broken, and the house left next morning in a filthy condition, I had my men move it back here near this house, where we had it cleaned, remodeled, and refurnished, and for many years some one has occupied it at a very nominal rent, which has been usually paid in services about the place. As long as we gave it freely it was abused, but as soon as rent was paid for it, it was taken care of. You may find your own moral. To me it seems to show that giving something for nothing is not in accordance with the divine scheme of life, and it will not do. Also that people are not yet developed to that point where they can do without the

law. Just now the house is vacant, but I have a tenant in view for it who I think will come to-morrow. It is a young man about thirty years of age, a poet, and a dreamer, and a musician. At times he seems inspired, and he touches my soul with the music of his violin as no other player ever has done. He is not a money maker, has little knowledge of the value of a dollar, but even if he were hungry himself, would give his last cent to any one he thought needed it. He is a composer, but not consistent nor persistent enough to accomplish much as yet. What he needs is a guardian who loves and understands him, and who will guide him into proper channels. I discovered him by chance, and found him living in a cheap lodging house, where at the time he had less than a dollar between himself and want. I have taken a fancy to the young fellow and have offered him the house to live in, and promised to procure for him some pupils to take lessons upon the violin, upon which he certainly is a master. His name is Philip Rice, and you may see him and hear him play the next time you come here."

Soon my other guests arrived, Mr. and Mrs. Wilson, Mr. and Mrs. Scott, with their son Harry and daughter Mabel, Mr. and Mrs. Manning and their son Paul. Harry Scott was a physician like his father before him, and was succeeding to his father's practice, who was retiring. Harry was thirty years of age, and a capable physician. Paul Manning had also followed in his father's

footsteps, and was an ordained minister of the Presbyterian Church. He was about the same age as Harry, and they had been college chums together.

"I had hard work to get away," said Harry, "for there is a great deal of sickness at present, and I am busy nearly night and day."

"How much of your practice would be unnecessary," said I, "if people possessed a good knowledge of their bodily machines, understood the laws governing them, and were willing to obey them?"

"It would all be unnecessary," said his father, "if people cared enough about their bodies to understand and take care of them, and were willing to go to the trouble to keep well. Here is certainly a remarkable thing when you come to think of it. Health, it is admitted, is our dearest and most prized possession, and yet not one person out of a hundred is willing to learn and obey the laws, obedience to which would bring him continuous health, and the breaking of which brings him sickness. Many people act as though they thought that health or sickness were something which was thrust upon them by some outside power, and they themselves had nothing to do with it. They abuse their bodily machines for years until sickness ensues, and then they rush to a doctor and expect to be yanked back into health in a few hours or days. The longer I practice medicine the less value I place upon the administration of drugs. Pain and disease come from the

efforts of nature to restore the body to harmony, and except in very extreme cases, all the patient needs to do is to stop breaking the law, and give nature a chance to cure, which she will do in every case where cure is possible at all."

"Looking at the matter in the strict sense," I said, "I do not believe that any human being has any right to be sick, under ordinary circumstances at least. If we consider that Deity is omnipotent and omnipresent, and is in absolute control of the universe, then the laws which govern the universe down to its minutest detail, are divine laws, and to be obeyed. Then the health laws are to be obeyed as much as the moral laws, and it is just as surely a sin to be sick as it is to be otherwise wicked. I do not see how we can logically make any distinction. Ignorance of the law will not excuse us from the penalty, and I do not believe that any soul will ever enter any permanent heaven, until that soul has learned to obey every law of life and being."

"Then you do not believe that sick people when they die can go to heaven?" asked Paul Manning.

"No," I said, "I do not believe there are any sick people in heaven, nor do I believe that any soul from a sick and diseased body ever goes direct to any heaven, but I do believe that all such souls have another chance to live in a physical body, and that they will continue to have such chances or opportunities until they finally learn

the laws, and by obeying them, reach a state of physical and moral health which constitutes heaven of itself."

"Then you think that the soul after death comes back into this physical life again, do you?"

"Yes, I do," I said. "If the soul persists at all it must go somewhere, and receive its reward or punishment, and to what possible place could it go where it would reap its just deserts as surely and quickly and justly as to come right back into this physical life, and face the harvest of its own acts? Before any heaven worth while is ever accomplished, all souls occupying it must have reached the same state of development of strength and health and serenity, and as all mental growth, which is soul growth, is made in this physical life so far as we have any evidence, then it follows rationally that enough physical life will be given each soul to enable it to develop into that condition which would fit and entitle it to a life in heaven."

"If you two do not stop talking religion," said Mabel, "we shall miss the music which we all so much enjoy, for it is already growing late, and there is absolutely no end to these religious discussions. Please let us change the order of the meeting, and have a season of song."

Complying with her request, I took up my violin, while Kate seated herself at the piano, and soon the old house resounded with a melody which filled its every nook and corner. Both young men

were good singers, and Mabel had a fine alto voice, and the harmony which resulted caused us all to feel at peace with the world. I believe that music is a distinctly curative agent, and is a great factor in the evolution of the world toward that kingdom which we believe will some day come to be.

After my guests had departed I sat down before the fire for my customary evening reverie. There has grown upon me of late a curious habit. As I lie back in my easy chair and close my eyes, or gaze steadily into the fire, there comes to my half-waking sense a strange feeling that I am not alone, but that my wife sits beside me as of yore, or sometimes it is Kate who is sitting there, and the sense of the long ago thrills me with its nearness. What is there about this girl, quite above and beyond her resemblance to the "Only Girl" in looks and voice, which appeals to me so strongly? It is a feeling which I can not define,—a lingering thought in my consciousness that she is more to me than a friend or acquaintance, and that her wonderful eyes hold a message for me if I could only interpret it. It seems as though the soul of the "Only Girl" has been calling to me of late through the medium of this girl who so resembles her. I am strongly drawn toward her by a feeling which I cannot quite understand. At times I catch myself watching her intently, eagerly, half as though I expected her to turn into the "Only Girl" before my very eyes, be-

cause of some well remembered tone of voice, or way, or manner which wakes my very inner consciousness, and sets the chords of my secret soul to vibrating in response. Her presence comes to my heart like a sweet strain of music, soft and low, out of the far beyond. Her soul is kindred, I know, to the dear one I lost so long ago. She is fair and sweet and good to look upon, and she has the same little shy, delicate tricks of manner which made the "Only Girl" so dear to me. It seems as though there was something about her which whispers of nearness to God, and a fineness and knowledge of purity which my coarse, masculine mind cannot fathom or understand. I often felt that way about my wife,— as though there were depths of purity in her being which it were profanity for me to approach.

I think I must be calling continually out into the silence of the unknown to an influence I know is there, and from which I half expect some message in reply; but none comes quite direct. I am longing for "the touch of a vanished hand, and the sound of a voice that is still," and sometimes a message is flashed back to me through a kindred soul like this, and while I do not quite feel the touch of the vanished hand, I almost hear the voice, and something else and more out of the depths of eternity seems to look at me through the windows of this other nearby soul. This is what we shall find, I believe, when we reach at last the perfect heaven,— just souls akin, and in each

and every one we will see and love something of our own. I am sitting to-night in the valley of yearning, making by faith a wireless connection in eternity with a reality which is beyond my present vision.

Then once there came to my slumbering senses a dream which was not all a dream, for in the depths of my memory-consciousness there exists, plain and clear and tangible, the background of reality from which this dream came. I stand upon the crowded street and the hurrying multitude passes me by, some east, some west, continuously. I look into the faces but I do not know them, and yet there seems to be a friendliness, a comradeship, in this jostling crowd, as though there was something of it to which I belonged or which belonged to me,— a certain feeling that these were friends of mine, only I could not quite remember them. Suddenly a pair of deep, dark eyes of brown are looking into mine, and the "Only Girl" separates from the crowd and stands by my side, as she used to do long ago. I speak to her and reach out to touch her, and it is not she, but Kate, and then in a moment not Kate either, but another, which may be you, Little Lady, and then in the whole crowd I see, here a trace of her, there a look like you,— a something in each face and form which reminds me of the love which fills all eternity for me.

I walk into the house and a little child runs to meet me, with outstretched arms and joyous eyes,

— my baby girl, that dear young soul, who for that fond time, so short, so short, dwelt in my home and life and heart, and gave me joy and happiness. Yet it is not she, but that other sweet baby in my friend's house yonder, and then even she changes to the small, smiling girl I saw but now upon the street who, when I smiled at her, looked into my eyes and laughed in perfect innocence and friendliness.

I stand by the lake at "Wayside," in God's great, beautiful out-of-doors, and watch the sunshine dance upon the shining, tremulous, happy leaves, while the soft wind carries to my grateful ear the songs of joyous birds and the harmony of a world made perfect. A clear, sweet voice is raised in song, a voice which thrills me in every fibre of my being,— the sweetest sound in the world to me,— and the "Only Girl" again stands by my side, happy, radiant, beautiful. Then in some wonderful way, while it is still she, it is also Kate, and then another, which may be you, and then another, and not even you, but yet always the "Only Girl," and in some strange way this seems all right to me, and not mysterious.

I sit in my room by the open fire,— the old familiar room,— this room, my dear, with its south window, its wide fireplace, its walls lined with our loved books, and the "Only Girl" sits beside me. Then it is not she, but Kate, then you, and then another whom I now recognize as the angel of memory, whom God has sent to bring me happi-

ness, if I have earned it. Hark! the angel speaks.

"God has sent me to you, dear child, to tell you that in each and every woman whom you meet there is some part or trait of that dear wife you loved so well. In each little child is some attribute or look of the baby girl whose picture is enshrined in your heart of hearts. In each friend you now have is some part of that dearest friend you loved so well, and it is God's wish and desire and command that you recognize and acknowledge this resemblance in all his children whom you meet in daily contact, for only thus will it be in that heaven which he has prepared for you, whose many mansions will contain only friends, and never enemies."

CHAPTER III

It is Christmas Day in the afternoon, Evelyn, and another month has slipped away into a past eternity since I talked to you last. I have had no callers to-day, and although I received several invitations to join in festivities at other places, I decided to pass the day here with my books and my memories. A fierce storm of wind and snow has been raging outside for several hours, and if it keeps up much longer the roads will be impassable. However, it is snug and warm inside, and a bright, cheerful fire is blazing upon the hearth.

Several things have happened in this past thirty days, Little Lady, and I will talk to you a little about them. Philip Rice has occupied the little house for a month now, and he seems to be very contented there. He is a very lovable fellow, but as impractical as a child. I still see Kate quite often, and I understand that both Harry Scott and Paul Manning have discovered a great attraction about the Wilson home, and are there at every opportunity. Mabel says that Harry seems very anxious about his patient in the Wilson house, and she thinks the case must be a dangerous one. Kate has been at "Wayside" several times lately, and she and Philip have passed hours

together with their music; also Philip has gone to her home with his violin to have her accompany him on the piano.

Day before yesterday Kate and Mabel, with Harry and Paul, passed the evening here with me, and we had Philip in with his violin. It was one of his times of inspiration, and after he and Kate had played together for some time, an incident occurred which has since caused me some uneasiness. He was standing by the piano and Kate was sitting upon the stool, her hands resting in her lap and her gaze fixed upon the floor. She seemed to be in a half-dreaming state. Then Philip lifted his violin and commenced to play softly. It was a harmony which had never been set to note, one of those improvised melodies of which his soul seems full. We all sat entranced by the beautiful music. He played as though all else but the music was forgotten, with his gaze fixed upon Kate's face, when suddenly she lifted her head and looked him full in the eyes. For an instant their eyes clung to each other, and I saw her face go white, then flushed, and she arose from her seat and moved away. He stopped playing upon the instant, and putting his violin in the case, bade us all "Good-night," and went to his little house, and we saw him no more that evening. What passed between them in that look I can only guess, but that some message was delivered which both understood I am very sure. I know that a message can be thus conveyed, for thus I spoke

upon occasion with the "Only Girl," and the memory of it is very perfect to me.

I had gone to her home one beautiful October day, determined to put my fate to the test and tell her the old, old story. We had walked down together to the shore of the lake, and were standing there silently. I was rehearsing in my mind the carefully prepared speech which I had intended to make, when I looked up suddenly and found her eyes fixed upon my face. I gazed deep down into those amber depths and read there the answer, clear and plain, to the question I was about to ask.

"Sweetheart," I cried, clasping her in my arms.

"Yes," she whispered, as she hid her face upon my shoulder, then raised her willing lips to receive my first kiss. There was no need of speech. The question had been asked and answered.

That some message like that passed between Philip and Kate I am convinced, and that they each realized that the other knew and understood I am very sure. The memory of this haunted me this Christmas night and made me uneasy, as I arose and looked out of the window.

The storm was still raging violently and darkness was beginning to gather, when there came a sound of voices at my door, and Kate and Mabel and Harry came into the room, shaking the snow from their garments. They had been out for a Christmas ride, had been caught in the storm, and had experienced great difficulty in getting as far

as "Wayside." I told them to 'phone to their people where they were, and to stay all night in my house, which they decided to do. A little later a neighbor called up and said there was a party of young people at his house, and if I were alone they wanted to come over and have a little dance. I told them to come along, and soon they arrived, a merry, laughing company, filling the old house with the music of many happy voices. Philip was routed out, and as he also had company, a couple of his musical friends having paid him a visit, we soon had the old hall in the third story resounding to the enlivening music of the dance and the sound of rhythmic flying feet.

After the dance was over, the neighboring young people had departed, and my guests had gone to their rooms, I went back down to the great living room, and sitting down before the dying embers of the fire, gave myself up to the memory of another Christmas Day long ago, when there had also been a merry party in the old house, and she and I had come down to this same place afterwards when the house was still, and had sat down together where I am now sitting alone. Alone to-night, but I can call up those blessed memories of the long ago when I, too, had a wife and child.

As I close my eyes, dear silent memory comes whispering sweet stories to my eager listening ear, and with soft voice and loving words lures me back again to that Christmas night of long ago, and a picture floats before me like a glimpse of

paradise, which holds for me all the dear treasures of my heart's desire,— this very room, a fire like this in the great fireplace, the lights turned low, two easy chairs before the fire, in one of which I am, and in the other my wife, the "Only Girl." Suddenly we are conscious that a little white-robed figure is coming down the stairs, and my dear little baby girl, who has been awakened in some way from her sleep, comes climbing into my lap to give papa another good-night kiss and to say another little prayer at mamma's knee because it is Christmas Day and she is so glad. I fold the sweet little figure in my arms, and look over her curly head straight into the great hazel-brown eyes of the "Only Girl,"— those eyes, those wonderful, beautiful eyes, in whose never-ending depths I can see and almost read the wisdom of the ages, and something more, a great, wonderful secret of God, which can never be told in words, but is carried thus to favored souls by one of his elect. What is this infinite secret which I always could see in your eyes, my love, and could almost translate into words? Is it a divine intimation of the after-life, a hint of what the resurrection means and is,— a message that in and beyond this physical body stands the soul, ready to rise into life everlasting when the physical loosens its hold and lets it go? Surely it is God's secret of immortality looking out of your eyes of mystery, my wife, my love, and your soul is calling to mine to-night across the barrier which

this physical has placed between us, and my soul answers that I will not fail you, sweetheart, but will meet you again in God's good time.

There was always a message for me in your eyes, my love, from the first day on which they looked into mine to that last day when you parted from me forever with a kiss. Always I found there comfort and help and love and compensation in full for any and all cares which the world could bring me. And to-night, this Christmas night, they still carry that message across the years, and bring me peace and resignation and hope.

A light hand falls upon my shoulder, and looking up suddenly, I behold by my side my wife, my darling wife of that dear yesterday which is separated from me only by the years.

"O Sweetheart," I cried, and seized her hands, but it was Kate who answered, although in the tones and accent of the "Only Girl."

"Why, Uncle Jack," she said, "how I must have startled you, but I knew that you were here, and I wanted to talk to you."

"Sit down, my dear," I said. "I was just dreaming of my wife, and at first I thought that you were she."

"Uncle Jack," she said, "you believe in divine control; now do you not believe that there is some influence, some power which plans for us, and which does not leave us quite free ourselves,—something, I mean, which leads us on into situations which we really would not deliberately

choose of ourselves, and which in a certain sense compels us to do its bidding?"

"No, my dear, I do not believe that there is any power or force or influence which interferes in the least with our own free moral or mental agency, or which compels us against our will to any course of action. We often would be glad to lay the blame for our actions upon some mysterious power which compels us, but I believe that we are absolutely free, under the law, in our mental operations, and that is why we must stand the full penalty of transgression ourselves. If we break any law we will suffer the penalty surely and certainly, and there is no power which can forgive us and thus turn the penalty aside. Sin, in the last analysis, is a mental thing. If we do wrong there is no escape from the memory of that wrong, and there is no power which can suddenly wipe out the memory of the wrong without wiping us out at the same time. It is a sure and certain fact to me that whatever it is that persists after the change we call death must of necessity carry the memory with it, or it would not be us, but something else quite different. Take our memory away and we are gone, for it is only by this that we know ourselves to be ourselves. Without the memory a soul would be a blank, a nothing, a thing without personality or individuality, and having no concern for itself."

"Well," said Kate, "if memory lasts with the soul, and the soul is born again into another body,

why does it not remember its former existence?"

"Because the new brain in the new body has nothing to remember, it having had no former experience with the soul which is now using it. The brain is simply the machine, the instrument, which the mind, the soul, uses to function in during a physical life, and the brain can not respond to any experience which it has not had. Anything outside of its own experience is but a dream, a vision, a fancy, and there is no way to prove it true, because it does not come within this brain's physical experience. The subconscious mind, or the inner soul, itself possesses memory of all of its own experience, which has been made up of different experiences in the physical life, and each physical life adds its part to the soul growth, the memory being the power by which it holds the results of that physical life experience.

"Now, my dear, let me give you a fatherly word of advice. Do not decide too hastily that you are being led, or driven, or impelled into any act or thing or destiny in which you are not free to decide for yourself, and for which you are not to be responsible. Do not try to hurry fate, but know that if you serenely and cheerfully do your very best, the Good Law will carry you to happiness, surely and certainly."

"Thank you, Uncle Jack, and now before I go back upstairs, please let us sing just softly, by ourselves, that dearest love song which you and I love so well."

And so we sang together the song which my wife and I sang on that last night in which I ever saw her alive.

When I retired my mind was still full of this recollection, and I went to sleep with Kate's voice still in my consciousness, and the remembrance of that long past time when I first heard a voice like that, and the strange dream which followed it. Then I had another most wonderful dream, like the first, and just as clear and real. My dream commenced with a feeling that I was just inside a wall surrounding a castle of the olden time. Before me was the building, and behind me was the wall. Between myself and the castle there was a growth of bushes and small trees, and inside the castle a voice was singing softly and sweetly this same song which we had sung to-night. The voice, I knew, came from the girl I loved, and to it every fibre of my soul responded. My errand there was to see her, but how I had reached the place where I was I do not know. These things are easy — in dreams. I thought that I must see the girl secretly, for this was the house of an enemy. I crept forward stealthily until I reached a door, which I opened. Guided by the voice, I went through one room and then another, then through another door, and I stood in a long low, stone-walled room, with a grated window at each end. The singer saw me and with a glad cry came to meet me. The girl was Kate, only not dressed as I had ever seen her, but with my wife's beauti-

ful eyes and hair, and when she spoke to me it was with my wife's voice, which thrilled me from head to foot.

"Oh," she said, "you must not come here. Do you not know that my father would kill you if he found you here?"

"But he will not find me," I said, "for I watched him go away from the castle with all his men-at-arms. I have come for you, my dear, and will take you to my home, for I cannot live without you."

"I cannot go," she said.

"Why, do you not love me?"

"Yes, I love you, but if I go with you it will mean the death of many men, for my father will fight for my return. You must not stay here; go now before my father returns and finds you."

Just at that moment came the sound of many tramping feet. The wide door at one side of the room opened to admit the girl's father and several of his captains, while there filed in at the opposite side of the room a company of soldiers, who ranged themselves in line along the wall.

"So," said the father, "we have caught you, and do you know the penalty?"

"Yes," I said, "I do." And turning to the girl, I kissed her and said, "Good-bye, my dear; you had better go now if you can, because this will be no fit place for a lady presently. I am ready to take the long journey," I said to the father, "for the girl is worth it, and I am not sorry that I

came; but I promise you that I will not go alone, for at least one or two of your fellows will bear me company."

The old man smiled.

"Good!" he said; "now I will give you a chance for life. Here are three of my captains, every one of them a fighter. You can fight these three men here and now, one at a time, my men to choose the weapons, and if you kill them all you may have the girl for a wife."

The first man chose war clubs, but he soon went down before me with a broken neck and a crushed skull. The next chose battle axes, and although he was a strong and active man, he was no match for me at this, I knew, and after a few moments' furious fighting I cleft his head to the chin with a quick swing of my axe. We do these things easily and well — in dreams.

The last man chose swords, and as I looked at his athletic and active figure, I knew that before me lay the fight of my life. But I, too, was strong and quick and muscular, and as I looked down at my brawny arms, bare to the shoulder, I did not fear the issue. He was a master of the sword, as I was, this brave, confident captain, and we fought up and down the room,— thrust, parry, guard,— first one giving ground and then the other, but neither gaining any decided advantage until, as we were fighting in the western end of the room, with my face toward the window, the sun suddenly shone out, and a ray struck me full in the eyes,—

for a moment dazzling my sight,— and in that moment I felt his sword pierce my left side. As he drew it forth, the hot blood leaped out after it and splashed upon the stone floor of the room. Then I felt my strength failing, and slowly but steadily I gave way before him. I was losing fast when the girl's clear, vibrant voice came to my ear, as she leaned toward me with every muscle tense and rigid in her excitement.

"Take heart, my love, you must not fail."

Like a flash my brain cleared and my strength came back in answer to that voice which moved my very soul into activity. I stood my ground and more,— I could even drive him back, but I could not reach him with a sword thrust. Oh, if I could only get the sun in his eyes for an instant, as it had been in mine; but the sun only came out from between the clouds for a moment at a time, and I did not know when that moment would come. The girl seemed to know my thought, for her voice rang out again.

"Try it," she said. "I will tell you when to be ready."

I knew her meaning in an instant. I was to get my antagonist where the sun shone when it came through the window, and she would tell me when it was coming. Slowly I forced him to that spot upon the floor where I desired him and kept him there. Suddenly the girl called to me, "Ready now, quick," and I stepped swiftly to the right, and as he swung round to face me, the sun

once more shot a ray of light through the grated window square into his eyes. The next moment my blade went through his body, and his sword fell clattering to the floor, just as my senses reeled and unconsciousness overcame me.

When I again opened my eyes I was lying upon my bed in my room at "Wayside," and the rising sun was streaming into my face. The dream was so real and vivid that I involuntarily put my hand to my side, half expecting it to be covered with blood.

CHAPTER IV

My home at "Wayside" is brilliantly illuminated to-night, Little Lady, and there is music and dancing and happy, youthful voices coming from the third story, while below stairs there are gathered around the genial fireplace some half-dozen older heads, some of them the fathers and mothers of the gay children upstairs, and with them Charles and Robert and your friend John, who talks to you.

We have been up watching the dancers, and some of us partaking in a limited way, for age brings moderation and conservatism if it possess also sense. And now we are enjoying ourselves in our own way, which every one should have a right to do, so long as that way is innocent and does not reflect upon our neighbor.

"That is a happy company of young people," said Charles, "and I would wish that they might always be as happy and full of life and health as they are to-night; and so I think they might be if they all understood the laws, and were willing to obey them."

"What are these laws which you make so much of?" asked an elderly lady whose son and daughter were among the merry set upstairs. "There

is a great deal said in these days about the laws, but there are few who tell us what they are."

"One of the first laws," said Charles, "is to have a knowledge of self, for each one should know his own needs and capacities, his own limitations and requirements. There can be no ironclad rule laid down for every person, for we all live under different conditions and possess varying capacities. In the last analysis, ill health can be almost limited to two primary causes,— some imperfection in or with the blood, and some imperfection in the nervous system. So long as the blood is perfectly adapted to the needs of the body and the circulation is perfect, and so long as the nervous system is in perfect adjustment, there can be no sickness, for the general bodily health will be able to expel any enemy which enters the citadel, but if through too much food or too little,— and food in this sense includes drink also,— or if through the wrong kind of food or drink, or the lack of oxygen through improper or inadequate breathing, the blood stream finds itself unable to perform its functions properly, or if through worry or wrong thinking or lack of proper care the nervous system becomes deranged, there will soon result a lack of general bodily tone, which will manifest itself sooner or later in what we sometimes call a local disease, although, properly speaking, there can be no such thing as a local disease while the remainder of the body is in perfect health and strength. Our body is not a collection

of separate parts loosely gathered together, and each part working independently of the others, but a unit, a one, a machine operating so sympathetically, with each part so dependent upon the other, that what we call a local disease is but the manifestation in one part or place of a great strain which is being put upon the whole system, and which shows in that particular place because of a concentration of pressure there, or because that place is the weakest link in the chain. The symptoms of disease show the effort which nature is making to throw off or expel some great inharmony within; so the symptoms are beneficent and should be helped and encouraged, while our efforts should be directed to finding and removing the cause of the disturbance, and by careful and consistent effort, so build up the general health that the machine will have the strength to regulate itself, which it will do in every case if given the help which right living affords, provided we do not delay until too late the removal of the cause. Nothing brings disease but wrong living, and I consider a bad digestion a more sure indication of wrong living than is a guilty conscience, for digestion never is mistaken, and conscience sometimes is."

"But you are a physician; do you not believe in the use of drugs?"

"Except as a last resort and in extreme cases, no. Drugs do not cure, for it is nature, after all, which is the only curative agent, and if nature

was given proper opportunity and consideration in the beginning, there would be no need of drugs."

"I think," said Robert, "that Charles' statement of the unity of the body corresponds to my opinion of the unity of life. We are each a part of life,— of the great life which fills the universe,— and all life is one, and is bound together by such sympathetic bonds that one atom in this life cannot go wrong without injuring in some degree or sense the universal life. Each of us contributes to the great body of life whatever we are. If we are wicked or immoral, or sick or unhappy, we are an irritating factor in the great Life, and so out of harmony with the beneficent scheme of existence. I agree with John that no person has a moral right to be sick or unhappy any more than he has to be otherwise wicked, for we have no moral right to bring inharmony into the divine plan of things when by simply obeying the laws we can avoid it."

"But sometimes people become sick when they cannot avoid it, do they not?"

"Never," said Charles, "if we except accident, which sometimes seems unavoidable, but even in those cases, whatever comes to us by seemingly unavoidable accident should be borne graciously and uncomplainingly, because we have no right to add any mite to the inharmony of the world."

"What would you consider the cardinal rules for good health?"

"Proper care in the food supply to adapt it to our needs; proper amount of fresh air and out-

door bodily exercise; proper attention to our nervous system to keep it in normal condition; proper mental attitudes, which includes the entire absence of worry, and proper cleanliness and sobriety of both mind and body. These things, if correctly and continuously observed, cannot fail to bring us continued health and continued happiness."

"I do not believe," said Robert, "in the suppression of natural desires so much as in their education and direction into proper channels. It is a natural thing for young people to love to dance, as these are doing upstairs now, and I can see no wrong in allowing them to do so under such circumstances as the present. It is the unlicensed, unlimited, undirected indulgence, or the unnatural suppression which works the injury. To my mind, either extreme is wrong. The mother who allows her son or her daughter to come to such a place as this and enter freely into the innocent enjoyments of an evening like this, under her own and other mothers' and fathers' direction, is doing her duty in this matter to her children, as I view the matter, always allowing that the dangers and evils of excess or improper association are properly pointed out to those children, and that they are educated to love and desire only the clean and orderly manners and ways of life."

As he finished speaking, the music ceased upstairs, and soon the young people came trooping down. The dance was over for the evening,

and soon the old house was still and silent again.

This is February, Evelyn, and this evening party is but one of several which my young friends have held at "Wayside" since the winter days have come, for I love to have youth about me, and the old house rejoices in their presence. Kate and Mabel and Harry are here to-night, and I heard, as I listened, the tones of Philip's violin in the old hall above. Paul would not come because he does not approve of dancing, and he is inclined to take life rather seriously. Kate and Mabel are to stay until to-morrow and go into the city with me, but the rest of the guests are leaving at twelve o'clock, for we keep good hours at "Wayside."

My love for this girl is increasing every day, and I often find her image in my mind as I sit dreaming here alone in the evening, and her face comes to me in those visions of the night, when my physical body is asleep and at rest. Out of the somewhere come these thought stories of Kate and the "Only Girl," my wife, and sometimes it is difficult to tell them apart. I am sitting now alone in front of the fire, waiting for Kate, for she always comes down for a little last talk with me after the others are gone. She is coming now down the wide stairs, and I can hardly realize that I have not traveled back through the years, and that it is not my wife who comes, as she used to come long ago.

Kate ignores the chair which I have placed for her, and sits down instead upon a low seat at my

feet. The firelight gleams and glistens upon the brown masses of her hair, bringing the tint of gold plainly into evidence.

"Uncle Jack," she says, "what sort of a place do you imagine heaven to be?"

"Well, Kate, I do not conceive of heaven as any particular place at all, but just a condition in which we find ourselves when we reach complete happiness."

"But shall we not know each other there?"

"Yes, and no. We shall not meet any strangers outside of this physical life, for I believe that we are only a conscious memory then, and the only experience we will have is the remembrance of the physical life we have been through. I believe that the physical life is given us for the purpose of growth. I conceive that our soul, our mental consciousness, started and developed in the physical, and has evolved to be what it is through physical life experience, and it will continue to grow and develop in the same way. There is no reason that I can see why we should think that there is some other mysterious place where the laws are different than here. The Deity, as I conceive it, is one and the same, always and everywhere, and operates through the same laws everywhere.

"I can imagine no better heaven than a perfect physical life in a perfect physical world, and I face the prospect of another life in the physical with absolute serenity. Believing that I will be

helped or hampered in that life as I live this one, as I develop in this one, it is the part of good sense for me to so live this one that my circumstances and condition will be agreeable in that one. It is my business to develop all the harmonious mental strength possible now, so that I will have a fair start in that life which is to come."

After a moment of silence Kate said,

"Do you know that Mr. and Mrs. Wilson do not like to have me come here? They are afraid that association with you will destroy my faith, and their son William is very outspoken in his protests. They are all wrapped up in their religion, and are very intolerant with any one who does not believe as they do. Uncle Jack, with all my friends, I am very lonely sometimes, and I wish, oh, I don't know what I wish."

"Kate, my dear," I said, taking her hand, "you know that I love you, do you not? Do you also love me, dear?"

"Yes," she said faintly, without raising her eyes.

"Kate," I said, "look up here. Will you be —"

"Uncle Jack, how old are you?"

"Sixty years this year, Kate."

"And I am twenty-four. How old would your little girl have been if she had lived?"

"Why, she would have been twenty-four also this year."

"Well, I will be your little girl if you will let me,— only that, dear Uncle Jack, forever."

The tears were running down her face now, and she bowed her fair head upon my knee. We sat there in silence for a time, and then Kate, rising, said,

"I ought to be very happy with all my friends, but someway —" and she turned and started toward the stairs.

"Kate," I said, "wait just a moment. I want to tell you this. You shall be my little girl from this night forth, and I will put you in that place in my heart which she would have occupied if she had lived. I think she would have been like you, dear, for she was growing like her mother, whom you so nearly resemble."

"Oh, thank you, Uncle Jack, I — I —" and there came a longing, wistful look into her beautiful eyes, and I knew that there was something which she wanted to tell me but did not quite dare. "Good night," she said, and went quickly up the stairs.

I sat down again in my chair and watched her disappear. There was some secret very near to utterance behind those sweet lips to-night, and I wondered what it was. A moment later there was a knock upon the door, and going to it, I admitted Philip.

"I saw your light, and so came to talk to you," said he. "I must go away from here and I

wanted to tell you about it. I have been very happy and contented here, but now I must go, because it would not be honorable to stay."

"Do you love Kate?" I asked.

"Yes," he answered, "I love her madly, passionately. I am so absorbed in my love for her that I can think of nothing else. I hear her voice in the music of my violin; the wind whispers her name in the tree tops, and the birds sing it in their songs of joy. My dreams are full of her, and my waking hours obsessed by her. She is the one great fact in the world to me, and I must go away before I lose my self-control and tell her. I realize my lack of financial ability, and I know that it would be dishonorable to ask her to share my fortunes, even were it possible that she would consent. I have an offer of a position as musical director in Saint Louis, and will go there at once and accept it. I want to thank you for your kindness to me, and ask you to keep my secret, for others must never know. I am here now to bid you good-bye, for I will leave to-morrow."

"Well, Philip," I said, "I can sympathize with you in your love for Kate, and appreciate the wisdom and honor of your decision. Take my advice and go, as you propose, and stay until next December; then come back and make me a visit. In the meantime work hard and faithfully, and do not allow your love for Kate to interfere with your success. Keep a brave heart and hold fast to hope. Prove yourself a man, worthy, honor-

able, capable, and have faith that whatever you deserve will surely come to you in the end. Do not speak to Kate before you go, nor write to her afterwards, and believe that as she is now, she will be when you return. Do your honest and earnest best, and whatever you so ardently desire may some day be yours. And now good night and Godspeed, and remember that whenever you stand in need of a friend you may certainly count on me."

With a last handclasp, Philip again bade me good-bye, and went silently to his little house, while I sat down again before the fire — alone.

I believe it is a good thing for a man sometimes to be alone,— to enter the solitude with his own soul, and there face the questions of his life; for so must our personal decisions be reached if they are to be of any lasting value to us. Friends and comrades and companions are necessary for our happiness along the journey, but "when the soul goes forth to battle it goes forth alone," and the personal conflicts which bring us strength and wisdom and happiness are fought out alone, in the silence of our own consciousness.

I had come perilously near the edge of things to-night in my talk with Kate, for I had been carried away by my love for her, or for the girl whose place she seems to occupy, and I wanted the right to shield her from the unnecessary cares and annoyances of life, as I had tried to shield the "Only Girl" before her. I wanted the old

sense of responsibility for another's welfare that I used to feel in the old days, and which was a constant source of joy to me. I believe it to be necessary for every man to have some one person to love and care and provide for; I believe that we grow to love God only through our fellow beings. It seems to me that those old monks who shut themselves away from others in order to live their selfish, ascetic lives missed the very end and aim of existence, which is to love God in our fellow beings rather than in some separate and mysterious way.

I was going through an experience this night which was good for me, for I was learning the lesson of adjustment,— that I must live in harmony with the good surrounding me in a natural and reasonable manner, and not in some selfish, unreasonable way of my own. In my selfish regard for Kate I had become almost blind to the fact that youth demands youth,— it is the law — and age must look in other ways for its compensations. I must be satisfied with friendship and acquaintance with this girl as with others, but reason as I might, there still was a pull upon the heart-strings for something more than that,— for wife, or child, or some one near enough to give me the right, above and before all others, to be near them. Surely the prophet knew whereof he spoke who said, "Verily, it is not good for man to be alone."

Still, I know that I must stand up to the discipline of life, for it is the struggle of soul that

saves, and life must not be too easy, or thinking too easy, because easy thinking is apt to be foolish thinking, and only effort makes growth. I say it over to myself often enough, but it is difficult to get away from the fact that I want some one to work for, to fight for, and to live for; and I want that some one to be —

But I will not allow myself to grow morbid, but take joy to be alive, and to be well and straight and strong and able to act a man's part in the world. So I will be smiling and happy and ready to take my share in every clean and pleasant thing which comes to me. The happy memories of the past will be mine for always, and my endeavor will be to increase them in every possible way.

CHAPTER V

One evening in April, when I came home from the city, I found Kate waiting for me at "Wayside."

"My dear," I said, "this is an unexpected pleasure. To what kind fairy am I indebted for this good fortune?"

"Oh, I wanted to talk to you," said Kate. "It seems as though you are the only one to whom I can come when I am troubled, and want to have the wrinkles all smoothed out for me. It always does me good to be here, for it rests me as no other place does. There seems to be something so quiet and substantial and established about this great solid old house, and you yourself are always so serene and even and confident that there is a sense of protection that comes to me here which I do not feel elsewhere, and all my worries and doubts vanish when I talk to you. To-day I was nervous and worried in spite of myself, and I could not throw it off there at the Wilson home, so I asked Aunt Rachel to let me come and visit you, and to my surprise, she offered no objection. If you will allow me, I will stay until to-morrow."

"My dear," I said, "I will be more than glad

to have you stay, and now let us cast all the annoying thoughts out of our minds until after dinner, for it is not well to carry our troubles to the table with us, any more than to carry them into our sleep. Let us play a little music together and sing one or two of our favorite songs, and take to our dining the cheerfulness which nature asks for, and then after dinner, if it be necessary, we will come here and unburden our souls to our hearts' content."

So we sang and played until dinner was announced, and we enjoyed a pleasant, happy, quiet meal together, just Kate and I, and I told her how pleasant it would be for me if I could have her bright and happy face opposite me always. Finally we were back again in the great living room, and drawing up our chairs before the blazing fire, we sat in silence and content for some time, until Kate at last spoke.

"Uncle Jack," she said, "I do not think that I can stay at the Wilson home much longer, for I begin to feel like an intruder there. They are not really my uncle and aunt, you know, but only distant relatives, and I have no real claim upon them. I felt this when Aunt Rachel first asked me to come, but she pleaded so hard for me to take the place of the daughter which she had lost that I finally consented. I feel now that it would have been kinder to have left me in England, where I was making my own living and had hopes for the future. They are still very kind to me

at the Wilson home, and I suppose I ought not complain, but it seems to me lately that I can sense a different feeling toward me than at first, and especially in the case of their son William. I learned to-day that he is to be married soon and wants to bring his wife there, and they feel that it complicates matters somewhat because of my being there. Uncle Jack, I never did have a real home. My mother died before I was old enough to know her, and a relative of my father's brought me up. My father provided for me while he lived, but after he died I went to work for myself."

"Did your mother's relatives live there?" I asked.

"No," she said, "my mother was an American, and was a widow when my father married her. Her first husband had been an actor, and she was singing in grand opera when my father met her."

"What was her name?"

"Her name was Annette, and her first husband's name was Barnes, but farther than that I know nothing about her. My father himself knew very little about her, and could tell me little except that she was very pretty, and a splendid singer."

"Annette Barnes," I said, "and an American girl. Do you know if her first husband's full name was Morris Barnes?"

"No," said Kate, "I do not; but why do you ask?"

"My dear," I said, "my sister Annette eloped

with an English actor named Morris Barnes, who later died in England, and we were told that my sister had died there also; but we never heard of her marrying again. Could it be possible that, after all, you are my niece, my only sister's child?"

"Oh, that would be beautiful," said Kate; "too beautiful and good to be true, I am afraid, but how can we know? I have no picture of her, and all that I know about her I have told you."

"Wait a little, Kate, and let me think. I will tell you what I will do. Our company wants some one to go to England next month to look after some of its business there, and I will go myself, and while there will investigate until I find out the truth. Let us keep this secret to ourselves until we are sure, but I believe that you are my sister's daughter, and if so, your home and place is here at 'Wayside,' your mother's old home. Now let us rest content with things as they are at present, and you may be sure that I will use every effort to find the truth. Maybe that is the reason that we have been so drawn to each other; it is your mother's blood calling to her brother to take care of her daughter."

"Uncle Jack, what a strange world this is, and what curious things happen in it! It seems as though there must be some intelligent spirit or force which brings these things about, outside of our own wills. Maybe our souls have a connection in some unseen way with a power which moves

them according to a plan divine and good. What is the soul, Uncle Jack? I understand how you conceive it to be made and how it has evolved, but what is it in itself? What is it like? If we could see it, what would it look like?"

"Well, Kate, I do not conceive of the soul as a small, compact, definite thing which is located in some particular place in our bodies, but a force or spirit which permeates our bodies as God, the force and spirit, permeates the universe. Scientists tell us that permeating the visible physical body is an invisible body which is a counterpart in every particular of the one we can see. This is the body of sensation, and it is in this body that thought is engendered and operates, and through this body the nervous system acts. The refinement and development of this body makes thought possible, for it is composed of mental force and substance. In this body a central organization is developed, and self-conscious thought is at last accomplished. I conceive this body to be the soul, and this centralization and corporation is what enables it to hold together of itself after it leaves the visible physical body. Memory of a common life experience holds the organization together by the same law of attraction which holds together the visible body. So the soul is the mental element of our body, held together by a central organization which enables it to persist after the disintegration of the visible body at what we call death. In life after life

this organization becomes more perfect and more strong, until at last immortality and eternal life are reached. Scientists also assure us that matter or substance is capable of divisibility into so fine a condition, possessing so rapid a vibration, that it becomes invisible to our physical vision, and I conceive the soul to be composed of this invisible material, which is matter in so fine a state that we cannot see it now, but it may be that some day man will develop the faculty of sight sufficiently to enable him to see this duplicate body or soul which is now invisible, just as men will some day be able to read each other's thoughts without assistance from spoken words. All these things are among the possibilities of the future."

After a silence of some moments, during which Kate was very thoughtful, she said,

"I do not see why it is that I seem more willing to accept whatever you tell me, and am more able to believe it, than what any other person tells me. Your explanations seem so plain to me, and I can see how it could be as you say, while others talk about these things in set phrases which really mean nothing to me when I try to think them out afterwards."

Again silence came upon us, and I watched the light come and go upon Kate's perfect face as the firelight touched it lovingly, for we were sitting without any light save the fire in the grate, and when the flame would leap up the light lingered caressingly in the masses of her wonderful hair,

so like the hair of the "Only Girl," who used so often to sit here beside me in the happy days of long ago.

"Are there pictures in the coals, my dear?" I said.

"Perhaps," she answered, "but just now there is a picture in my mind, so dear, so beautiful, that I fear it can never come true."

"Yes, I can paint that picture for you, Kate, and I believe it will yet come to be. You see this old house at 'Wayside' which you love. You see a real Uncle Jack whom you also love, and you see, my dear, a younger face which you love more than all the rest. I know your secret, Kate, and I have no word to censure you, but there are lessons which Philip needs to learn before he takes upon himself the responsibility of the welfare and happiness of another. It is well for a man to be generous and unselfish and considerate for others, but there is also a duty which he owes to himself and to society, to so provide for himself and guard against emergencies that he will not be a charge upon others, and will be able to care for those dependent upon him comfortably and reasonably. Philip has been somewhat careless heretofore, giving away to others,— and sometimes to their hurt,— what he should have husbanded for his own use in time of need, but now that he has an incentive which he did not have before, I expect to see him change his ways and methods in this regard."

"How did you know?" said Kate.

"I read it in your face," I said, "for I have become so used to reading a face like yours that I can translate its every expression; but what about Paul and Harry?"

"Paul asked me yesterday, and when I told him it could not be, he wanted to argue the matter with me. He told me it might mean my soul's salvation to say 'yes,' and I think he meant that I would then be away from your influence. Mabel loves him, and she would make a far better minister's wife than I, for she is ready to believe anything he tells her, while I am not, and never could be. Has Philip ever written to you?"

"Yes, I received a letter from him yesterday, and he is well and likes his work; only he is lonesome for his friends here, but maybe he will outgrow that."

I did not show her the letter which reposed in my coat pocket, and which had been full of love for her, deeming it best to let her think soberly over this matter without too much encouragement at present, but after she had retired I took the letter from my pocket and read it over again.

"*Dear Friend:*

"I am sitting alone in my room to-night in Saint Louis, but my heart and my thoughts are back at 'Wayside' with you and my other friends there. I am thinking that maybe Kate is there with you, for I love to think of her there rather than in the Wilson home in the city. It has always seemed to me more

appropriate that she be there with you, for I know that she loves you and that you love her, and I imagine her sitting by your side in that beautiful great room, and she is gazing into the glowing coals of the fire while you talk to her in the way she so dearly loves. As the days go by, my love for her is growing stronger and stronger, and its influence is changing my views of life and making me a better and more capable man. Never again can I be the unthinking, careless person of all those past yesterdays in which I was content to dream and idle away my time, taking no particular interest in the strenuous life going on about me. There is now for me an object and an aim in life which I did not possess before, and I am trying my best to be a man and take a man's place in the world. I am teaching every day, and my evenings I am devoting to musical composition. There is a melody ringing in my soul which I cannot reproduce in words or notes, but sometimes I fancy that I can catch it and bring it forth through my violin. It is the story of my love for Kate, and you could understand it, I think, if you could hear it in the moments of my inspiration from it, for you, too, know what it is to love deeply, entirely, overwhelmingly. I am not allowing doubts to enter my mind, but am keeping in remembrance your words to me, that if I live right and do my best, some day my own will come to me."

CHAPTER VI

I am talking to you from a beautiful little English village to-night, Little Lady, and to-morrow I am to start for home, for my labors here are ended. I am filled with happiness, for Kate is my own niece, my sister's only child, which fact has been proven to me beyond the shadow of a doubt. I found the relatives of Morris Barnes, and the house where he died, and in which my sister lived at that time. The relatives told me of her return to the operatic stage, and of her marriage later to James Wilson, of the birth of her daughter, and her own death afterwards. In another part of England, where I am to-night, live the relatives of James Wilson, and here is the house where Kate was born, and where her mother died. Among her effects was a gold locket engraved "From Morris to Annette," and containing the pictures of my sister and Morris Barnes. They did not give this locket to Kate because they, being rigidly religious, did not want her to know or think much about her mother, who was a singer upon the public stage. I have visited her grave and strewn flowers upon it, as a last sad remembrance from a brother who would gladly take her to his arms if she were alive.

I have been in this village some days, and today I visited its chief object of interest to the traveler, the castle of Lord DeGarcy, which stands upon an eminence a short distance outside of the town. The DeGarcy estate is a large one, and the family is one of the oldest in England, some member of it having taken part in every important event in England's history for more than a thousand years. The present Lord DeGarcy is a pleasant and genial gentleman, and having met him in the course of my work, he recognized me as I walked past his grounds and invited me to inspect them. After showing me the various objects of interest about the grounds themselves, he took me into the castle and showed me that portion of it which he said had been built, as far as could be known, in the eighth century. The castle is an imposing pile of brick and stone, and has been changed, remodeled, and added to from time to time by its different occupants, with the exception of one wing or angle which has been kept by each succeeding owner as near as possible in its original condition. This ancient part consists of a high, square tower, and some five or six rooms, with small grated windows and iron doors. The foundation rests upon the rock, and the walls are solid stone and masonry. Lord DeGarcy pointed out where the old surrounding wall used to run outside the castle, and where the moat once was which lay beyond it. He told me some-

thing of the history of the house and the stories of some of its owners.

"The DeGarcys have always been an active people," said he, "and our family history would almost be the history of England itself, for a DeGarcy has figured more or less prominently in every historical event of importance in England during the past thousand years. One story is told of a young Rolland DeGarcy, who was the head of this branch of the house in the eleventh century. He, the story goes, was a happy, warm-hearted boy of twenty-two or three when his father died and he became the head of the house. He, like his father before him, was loved by his tenants and neighbors, and when he became converted by the preaching of Peter the Hermit, and was fired with religious zeal to join the crusade which was to rescue the sacred city and the sepulcher of the dead Christ from the hands of the infidels, he rode out from these castle walls one sunny morning, followed by three hundred armed retainers, the flower of the estate and the countryside. He went away, a laughing, happy, sanguine boy, to join the mighty army which was gathering for the conquest of the Turks. He came back at the end of four years, a hardened, cruel, bloodstained man, who ruled thenceforth with an iron hand and a merciless heart, until one day a peasant youth, whose sister Rolland had wronged, stabbed him to death as he sat carous-

ing with his knights at his own banquet table. Somewhere in this old castle the tragedy occurred; it may be in the very room in which we now stand.

"He had learned his lessons of cruelty, of bloodshed, of oppression and of lust from the Christian followers of a gentle, forgiving and non-resisting Christ, the loving Man of Nazareth, whose creed was the Golden Rule. But the followers had taken their creed, their belief and their doctrine from the Old Testament, and they were strictly adhering to its precepts. They burned cities and destroyed homes. They murdered men in cold blood and in hot blood. They ravished and outraged and killed women. They took little children by the feet and dashed their brains out against the stones. They cut and maimed the horses which they could not use, and left them to slowly die in agony. They devastated the land wherever they went, and as far as lay in their power, left not a living thing in it. And yet they did nothing which God did not command Joshua and others to do, and nothing but what David, that beloved and anointed of God, prayed to be given the power to do. They had plenty of precept and example in the Old Testament for their devil's work, and each man thought in doing it he was doing the will of God, and would be blessed of God for the deed.

"In the Wars of the Roses, the DeGarcy of this estate wore the red rose of Lancaster until he

was killed in battle, when the estate went to the next DeGarcy in line, who was a follower of York. The DeGarcy who held title here in the time of Charles First stood by his king, and fought valiantly for the crown, but Cromwell's victories meant his death and the giving of the estate to another DeGarcy of the same lineage, but who had been fortunate enough to fight on the Cromwell side."

While Lord DeGarcy had been talking, we had been standing in what must have been the banquet room of the ancient castle, and I had been vainly trying to remember what it was that made the old room look so familiar. Had I ever before seen a room like this, or where had I seen a picture of such a room,— long and narrow, with walls of hewn stone, and low vaulted ceilings of solid masonry, two doors opening to the south, one larger door upon the north, and high narrow grated windows at each end, one of them facing the west, through which the sun suddenly streamed upon the stone floor? Quickly it came back to me,— the room of my savage dream of the fight for the girl with Kate's voice and eyes. I knew it now perfectly, and right there in that patch of sunlight I had fought and killed my last adversary in that wild dream of long ago.

"Is there any other story of a tragedy in this room?" I said.

"There is a legend of a fight which occurred in the banquet hall of the old castle many years

ago, and the room may have been this one. There was a feud between the DeGarcys and a neighboring lord, in which members of the two houses killed each other on sight, and the story goes that a son of this neighboring lord and a daughter of the DeGarcys fell in love with each other, and the young couple met one stormy afternoon in the deserted banquet hall, where they were caught by the girl's father who came suddenly into the room. DeGarcy was a rough, fight-loving old chieftain who dearly loved bravery and strength, and he offered the young lover his life and the girl for a wife if he would fight then and there to the death several of his strongest warriors. The young man accepted the challenge and fought and killed all of his opponents, thereby winning the girl and binding together the two houses in a friendship which was never afterwards broken.

"In all of the wars which harassed England in all of the years of its authentic history, a DeGarcy has gone out from this castle to fight on one side or the other, and whenever one fell, there was always another ready to take his place, so that this building and this estate has never wanted for a DeGarcy owner and occupant. If the walls of this old castle could talk, what tales they could tell of love and war, of happiness and hardship. Do you wonder that I reverence this house and grounds when I remember the stirring scenes which have taken place here, and the kings and

queens and noble folk who have trod these walks and slept beneath these roofs?

"They tell a tale of a fair Catholic maiden who lived here, a daughter of the house, and who had a Protestant lover among the neighboring gentry, in those troublous times when Catholic killed Protestant for his belief, and Protestant murdered Catholic for the same reason. The young Protestant noble met the girl here one evening somewhere on the grounds, and was discovered by the girl's father and some soldiers of the crown who chanced to be here. It is said they killed the young gallant here in the presence of the girl, and the lady queen who ruled England at that time applauded the deed, saying that if God was intending to torture and destroy these unbelievers any way some time, it was only doing his work to commence upon them here and now."

I walked back to my lodgings, silent and thoughtful. If the Bible was the literal Word of God, then as Lord DeGarcy said, he had given these commands to the captains of his special people, who had followed them out to the letter. Perfectly consistent was David, that licentious, cruel, lying, immoral friend of God, and quite properly did the crusaders follow these instructions. Has God changed since those days, or has man changed as he grew in knowledge and kindness? The conception of God held by any man, or any race or tribe of men, coincides with their ideas of what God ought to be. If they are

cruel, evil, immoral and revengeful, their God, as they think of him, will have those qualities. Each man builds his idea of God upon his ideal of what God should be, and those Old Testament writings were only men's guess, colored by their own mental condition, of what God was like, and what he would say and do. I would rather think of the Bible as being what I fully believe it to be, the human conceptions of God and his ways as the mind of the writer conceived it. This makes reason to me, and makes the Bible a consistent and continuous story of God as man thought of him in the different ages of the world. There is absolutely no foundation for the theory of supernatural revelation except man's superstitious belief in miracle and his desire to make of God a mystery. We must not forget that the Person we call God is a purely imaginary creation, formed in our minds from baseless tradition and ancient superstition, and a desire to propitiate, or commune with, a power which we feel is greater than us, and of which we are afraid. We must also remember that the orthodox soul is an imaginary thing, and its existence cannot be demonstrated in fact. We realize that there is intelligent control of the universe, and we feel ourselves to be a part of, or akin to, the power which controls, but beyond that we theorize and guess.

Now what of this old castle, and its stone-arched, gloomy banquet hall, and my strange

wild dream at "Wayside"? What possible connection could there be between them? And what is this half tangible consciousness which still haunts me, that the place has been at some time familiar to me in another way than in that dream, and that the dream was only a memory? Where had I seen it before that time, and what is this partly awakened sense which tells me that I ought to remember, and which holds a word, faint, indistinct, just beyond my conscious reach,— a word connected with this ancient room of masonry,— the key word of the picture which, if I could only remember it, would unlock the mystery? Try as I might, I could not call the thing to mind, and so I dismissed it from my thoughts, and occupied myself with other things.

Several days afterward, when I was seated in a steamer chair upon the deck of a transatlantic liner, and was in the midst of a political discussion with a fellow passenger, there suddenly popped into my conscious mind from somewhere the one word "Carcassonne," the name of an old town in southwestern France, and following this the sentence, "Of course there are ghosts in Carcassonne." Then came back to me in detail a story related to me by a traveler and writer of an old castle which he had visited which contained a room like this, and which, so ran the legend, had been used in that early day, some hundreds of years ago, as a banquet and judgment hall, at one end of which the old knight sat

in judgment, and at the opposite end, where the grated window was, men fought with swords or knives or clubs to settle their disputes, while along the wall on either side were ranged the men-at-arms and retainers who were witnesses. Then he told me the very story which Lord De-Garcy had repeated. My talk with the traveler had been about one month before my dream at "Wayside," and the tale had been so vividly told that a plain mental picture was made in my mind of this old room and its curious usage.

Yes, I was now satisfied with the explanation of how I came to call forth the picture in my dream, but why should the word and story come back to me at this time, after I had seemingly dismissed it for several days, and come at a time when my mind was occupied with things entirely foreign to this subject? It was as though I had sent a messenger back into the long picture gallery of my memory, hunting for this picture which was hanging there somewhere, and after a search the messenger had found it and dragged it forth at once, and had thrown it down at my feet, as though to say, "Here is that picture which you sent for, good sir; my task is done."

Surely there are more things in this mental world than can be explained by any man's philosophy; yet I believe that in the inner depths of our subconsciousness lies the memory of all our past experience, and when our mentality has been evolved to a strength sufficient to build a phys-

ical body fine enough and harmonious enough, we will be able to call forth into the conscious mind any incident of our past experience in any life which has made a strong impression upon us, and contains good enough to cause us happiness in remembrance.

CHAPTER VII

I am back once more in my home at "Wayside," Evelyn, and the steady turn of the wheel has ushered into existence the month of July. Kate has been installed here as my niece and ward, and there is a continual sunshine in the old house which it has not known since that dark day ten years ago, when to me the sun went suddenly down at noon time and the birds stopped singing in the trees. Kate fits into the place provided for her perfectly, and it is very pleasant to find her happy face here upon my return from the city each day, and to have her opposite me at the dining table at every meal. Fate has been very kind to me in giving me this living picture of the "Only Girl," my wife, to cheer me and console me in the days which are to come.

I had written Kate when I would be home, and asked her to meet me at "Wayside," and when I opened the door and walked into the room where she sat at the piano, playing and singing softly to herself, she heard me on the instant and came toward me quickly with outstretched hands and the light of happiness shining upon her beautiful face. I held out my arms to her and she came into them, while the tears of pure joy filled the limpid depths of her wonderful brown eyes.

"My dear," I said, "my little girl; my own dear girl forevermore."

"Oh, I am so glad," she said; "so glad to think that you are really my Uncle Jack, and that I have a right to be here. It seems sometimes too wonderful and beautiful to be true. I have a home now, a real home, for the first time in my life, and the dearest, strongest man to love me and protect me. I am too happy to talk, and I believe I must just cry."

And cry she did, but they were happy tears; and I must confess to you, Little Lady, that my own eyes were not entirely dry. Afterwards I told her of my trip, and the proofs I had that she was my sister's child, and I gave her the locket holding her mother's picture.

"Now, Kate," I said, "if you wish you may occupy your mother's old room upstairs, which is the room that later my wife and the baby occupied, and which has been left until now just as she left it on that last day of her life. Here the baby was born, and here her dear young life passed out into the Great Beyond. Here are my wife's treasures and keepsakes, and the baby's playthings and some of the clothes she wore. You may pack them away now if you like, for it seems to me that you alone, of all who have been here since that time, have the right to do so. It is a pleasant room, and I hope that you will be as happy there as was your counterpart, my dear dead wife."

"Thank you, Uncle Jack. Now I know how much you love me, or you would not do this kind and graceful thing for me. I know that I will be very happy in that room and here with you, for it is the only perfect place in which I have ever been.

"I am glad to be here constantly for another reason also. Your talks with me have given me a vague unrest, a feeling that I am not yet upon sure ground concerning my religion. It seems as though you had taken away the faith I had, and I have not yet arrived at the certainty of knowledge which you possess. There is yet in my mind an unsatisfied longing to feel sure as you seem to feel, and I want you to explain to me until I either agree entirely with you, or can go back to my old faith, feeling certain of its truth."

"Well, Kate, I can give you my reasons for believing as I do, and if they do not appeal to you, I will be glad to see you cast them aside. Do not try to believe anything because I say it is so, but only accept what seems reasonable and sensible to you. I am as reverent and certain in my belief in an all-wise Deity as you or any other person can be, and I base my belief upon the scientific knowledge of the world. Scientists are growing to recognize the fact that there is an infinite Intelligence permeating the universe, and that within us and around us there is a Life which they must acknowledge as supreme. There

is no hypothesis which can explain the reason for evolution aside from an intelligent and omnipresent supervision. No one knows more certainly than the man of science that things do not happen in this world or life, but are controlled by fixed and unchangeable laws. If chance ruled there could be no science, for it is only by being able to trust in the constancy of the laws that any certainty of knowledge can be reached.

"I believe there will yet come a day when religious belief will be founded upon strict scientific facts; when it will agree with the sure and certain knowledge of the world as it is gained through the ordinary channels of the physical life. Then it will cease to be a thing apart and a theory of mystery and miracle. I believe that the coming religion will be a religion of common sense, and of natural, and not supernatural, attributes. It will be something which every man can understand as he understands all other things of life, by his reason and the faculties which he now has.

"Science declares that matter is immortal, that nothing is ever lost, that there is exactly the same amount of matter in the universe to-day as there was a million years ago, or as many years ago as we can think; also that there is the same amount of energy now as at any other point in time or eternity. Substance or energy never increases nor diminishes; only change occurs in form and arrangement. Forms change, but the

amount of matter and force always remain the same.

"If the soul is a force, a material energy,— which it must be or it is nothing,— then science declares it to be immortal, provided it can hold its form after the dissolution of the physical body. The laws of attraction and cohesion constantly work more perfectly as atoms grow more like, more congenial, more harmonious, and the law acts with constantly increasing power to hold together that form composed of like atoms which is harmonious with its environment. The soul is a spiritual force, which is a mental force, and it exists in a spiritual-mental environment, where harmony persists and inharmony disintegrates. Spirit is mental and eternal and immortal, therefore, the soul is immortal when it has reached spiritual-mental perfection and strength and harmony with the spiritual-mental environment.

"This is very close to a scientific demonstration of the immortality of the soul, and some day science will actually demonstrate its reality. Science also declares that a perfect form, perfectly adapted to a perfect environment, would never change, never dissolve, would live forever; therefore, the perfected spiritual soul in a spiritual environment would have reached eternal life.

"Individual life experience builds a thing we call a memory, which is not lost, but persists in the substance in which it is registered when made. This memory is the mental consciousness, the soul,

and persists as a mental conscious form after the coarser physical body is dissolved. That part of memory which is harmonious with its spiritual environment lives forever, because a mutual, congenial, harmonious life experience binds the substance of the soul into a harmony which is immortal when it reaches harmony with its spiritual environment.

"In order to reach immortality the soul must have enough life experience to develop the ability to persist of itself, no matter how many lives or how many ages it requires. A soul can only be grown to immortality through individual life experience.

"The result of the creative power is to evolve distinct individual mentalities into perfect units of the great Divine Mentality of the universe, each with a distinct individual memory of its own of the road which it has traveled to perfection,— each having learned the lessons of life in its own way,— each coming to see at last, that all the evil which it has experienced in the journey of development was caused by its own inharmony with the omnipresent laws of the All-Good. In no other way could a personal mentality be created which would know of itself good from evil, harmony from inharmony, right from wrong. It must work out its own salvation, free and untrammeled and uncoerced, and there must be no arbitrary interference with its perfect freedom of choice. It must slowly learn to choose the right

from its own desire, and thus rise above evil and unhappiness into an immortality of harmony. The great even justice of creation cares naught for the details of the individual personal journey, but keeps on its level, undeviating way, knowing that at last all deserving, persistent mentalities will reach the goal of a common perfection. Deity knows that the sparrow falls, but it also knows that the fall is a necessary thing to teach it at last to fly, and if the lesson be not learned this time, then there will be other times in which to learn it. That it takes many lives in which to learn all of life's lessons is no concern of the creative power, for thus only is strength and wisdom gained to enable that mentality to reach eternal life. There is no problem of evil except as we make it ourselves in the struggle against the everlasting laws of continuance. We are not machines, bound, crippled and predestined, but free mental agents working out our own destiny for and by ourselves.

"Let us suppose that for our use and happiness we needed a perfect creature, and in some wonderful way the making, growing and developing of that creature was in our own hands absolutely. Suppose that we had the power to start it on its way, and the ability to make all the conditions of its journey. Suppose that in order to develop the creature into what we wanted, it was necessary for it to learn all the lessons of life for itself. It must know, by actual experience,

sorrow and pain and hardship and tribulation, in order to develop the necessary strength to overcome these things and rise superior to them. Suppose we knew that all those which came through triumphant and developed that strength would be just the kind of perfect creature necessary for our happiness. Suppose we could watch the primary germs start, each building for itself a little shell or habitation, imperfect, inadequate and insufficient for its use for very long, but enough for its first needs. When it had outgrown this first habitation, it left it to build for itself a little better one, a little more adequate for its growing needs; and thus in shell after shell, house after house, each one a little better, more developed than the preceding one, until at last we saw it struggle up through all the stages of development into the perfect habitation and the perfect creature we desired.

"Do you think that we would care how many trials and troubles it had on the way, if we knew that each one was a benefit to it, and gave it strength and wisdom and ability to become what it must become to do our service? Do you think that we would grieve when we saw it lay down one body, one habitation, only to enter into another a little better adapted to its needs? If we knew that nothing whatever could be lost, but whenever it appeared to fail one time, it always had another chance to try another time; if we knew the end from the beginning, do you think we would worry

over the progress? If we knew that the perfect laws of growth and development were absolutely adequate and sufficient, and could not fail, do you think that we would interfere with the process?"

"Thank you, Uncle Jack," said Kate. "Every time you talk to me I understand a little better, and I know that living here with you I will in time grow into your certainty of faith, and now good night and pleasant dreams."

Pleasant dreams! How could I have anything but pleasant dreams, with Kate's fair face in my mind, and a happiness in my heart which was complete?

Very early the next morning I was awakened by some good fairy, when the first faint light of day was coming upon the earth. The soft wind was blowing in at the open window, laden with the spicy, pungent scents of the forest, and the low, sleepy twittering of the awakening birds was borne in upon the breeze. Filled with the sense of it, I jumped up and sat down upon the floor by the open window, and drank in long, deep breaths of that sweet, fragrant air. Slowly the light in the east increased and broadened and strengthened. Low lying along the horizon was a fringe of crimson glory, out of which rays of purple and amethyst and gold streamed upwards into the heavens. Slowly the shadows lifted and gave place to the joy of golden light; a few fleecy clouds in the blue sky were touched with the rainbow coloring; the gold and crimson bright-

ened and deepened. Then the whole wide eastern heavens were suddenly illumined, and the shadows fled before it like a thousand frightened witches, and the miracle of the sunrise was again accomplished before the wide-eyed, wondering vision of a boy, thank God, a man who was again a little boy, kneeling there upon the floor, as he had done in that same place long years before, in silent adoration before the beautiful, fragrant, joyous world upon which he gazed. The woods were suddenly vocal with the songs of birds, and another day was ushered into time from eternity. With my face turned toward the rising sun, I silently thanked God for the new life which was beginning for me at "Wayside," and that the old house had again the only thing it lacked before to make it a perfect home — a loving woman's presence.

CHAPTER VIII

Again the beautiful October days are here, Little Lady, and the woods are full of the wonderful coloring of autumn. The sunshine is like molten gold, pure and liquid and soft as velvet. The crispy freshness of the air holds a tonic, sweet as the nectar of the gods, and all the world is radiant with the glory of the coming change. October is and has always been to me, the most beautiful month of the year. The sky-blue mist enveloping the hillsides, the purple and gold of the foliage, the mellow sunshine of the days, and the snappy sharpness of the nights bring a sense of joy to me which is only equaled, perhaps, by that little belated summer time which comes along in the latter part of November, and which we call Indian summer. Between now and then there is likely to be a touch of cold, a winter in miniature, some snow, probably, which does not last, and a few sharp winds which whisper of the real winter just behind, and then come along those straggling, lazy, indolent, summer days which have seemingly stopped somewhere to play by the roadside, and so have been detached from the real summer procession. The main body of summer has

passed along sometime before, and is now out of sight on its journey with the birds to the southland.

Happy, careless, irresponsible days are those of Indian summer, loitering, sauntering by the roadside, cajoling here and there a mistaken fruit tree into jovial blossoms, and now and then a belated and misguided robin into thinking the real summer is not yet over, and that this beautiful time will last indefinitely. So the foolish bird sings gaily in the blossoming tree, and considers not the storms so soon to blow upon it. Centuries have told the tree and the bird that the summer is really gone, and these days are but an echo which cannot last, but some there are which will not learn, or do not heed, and so later are caught by the icy blasts of the winter, for nature cares naught for the tree or the bird in their out-of-season frivolousness, but will freeze them both relentlessly if they vainly try to stand against her laws.

But how can the tree help blossoming if its internal conditions demand it, and how can the bird help singing if its heart is full of music? And so I love these days of Indian summer. They are soft and warm and beautiful. Even the wind is gentle and kind and languorous. A purple haze is in the air, tempering the sunshine to our eyes, and softening the vision everywhere. A hush is over all. The strenuousness of blazing summer is past, the harvest is ended, and nature

rests content, pausing for breath before the wintry storms which are so sure to come.

And there is Indian summer in my soul to-day, begotten by these irrelevant, vagabond days, and I, too, want to stop and play by the roadside. When I pass a Sabbath or a holiday at "Wayside" at this time of the year, it seems to me that I would like to stay here forever, and work no more,— just to wander care-free in the fragrant woods, to row or sail upon the silver waters of the lake, to listen to Kate's clear voice in song, and to the sweet wailing tones of the violin; to sit at evening time, or when the wind blows chill, by the generous fireplace, with the south window at my back, and read or talk or silently create half-dreaming pictures in the glowing coals before me. It fills my soul with satisfaction for one day, but would it have the power to do that every day and every day forever? Ah, I am afraid that even this would lose its attractiveness if nothing ever came to break its ceaseless round of sameness. For one occasional day this is good, and after it I go back to my work rested and refreshed, and labor cheerfully and diligently with a glad heart and a smiling face. And this I hope to do as long as kind fate will give me health and strength to accomplish, and these days will be all the more appreciated because of their rarity.

It is good for man to work. It is in the scheme of things that if we would be happy, we must earn our happiness by effort. I fully believe that the

man who does not work, or who does not like to work, is more an object of pity than of envy, and I am not fully persuaded that the man who does not need to work in some manner for his daily bread is not out of harmony with the great creative plan, which builds only through personal striving and accomplishment. What does the man who does not labor know about the luxury of rest, or what does he know about real joy who has not tasted sorrow or overcome obstacle by his own personal exertion? If there ever will be a perfect life to live, either in this world or any other, it will be a life which holds the joy of effort and accomplishment, the joy of going on. Personal achievement gives us a sense of worthiness which we can secure in no other way, and that man who does not achieve for himself misses the very dearest thing in life.

So when I seriously consider it, I know that part of the joy of this Indian summer time lies in the fact of its contrast to other days before and after, and the happiness of these occasional idle holidays is increased by the labor of other days. The wisdom of all the centuries has put its seal of approval on the institution of one day of rest in every seven, and of the holidays which are coming more and more to be observed. These periods of relaxation are the safety valves of life, and enable us to recoup losses and gather strength to labor pleasantly at other times, and I know that the pure joy of these days lies in the fact

that behind me is the accomplishment of labor willingly performed, and before me lie the duties which are yet to be discharged.

But this day of which I write is in October, and we have still before us in pleasant anticipation those Indian summer days I speak of, and between now and then, if nature departs not from her custom, many perfect days of this most perfect month. To-night the wood fire is blazing upon the hearth, and Kate and I are before it, and I have been reading to her from a book which I have brought her for a birthday gift. To-day is her birthday, and last night as I sat here with her, I said,

"To-morrow, my dear, when I come from the city I will bring you a book, and we will read it together, just you and I. I have in mind just what kind of a book I will try to get, not a gift book, with flaming covers and picture leaves, but a book whose reading will stir our hearts and fix our minds upon the finer things of life.

"I will get a book writ by some one of whimsical brain and quaint thought, who will tell us things which we have heard before indeed, but presented now in a new and fanciful way, so that the light will strike old truths at a different angle and make them look like new to us. We will take the book to our favorite seat near the great, wide fireplace, and sit close together while I read to you. And when we are tired of the reading, my

dear, I will close the page, and we will give ourselves over to the reveries which the reading has called forth, and let our fancy build pictures in the future of our hearts' desire."

And as I said to her, it has come to pass, and we sit in front of the fire and dream, although her dreams and mine are not, and cannot be, alike, for mine are all of the yesterdays, and hers are of the great to-morrows. Therein lies the difference between youth and age, for youth dreams ever of the future, while age is full of the memory of the past. She sees in the coals the face of the man who is to come, while I see there the vision of the girl who was. We have much in harmony and in common, we two, for we are as congenial as age and youth can ever be, but in our dreams we are sometimes far apart, and it cannot be helped, for the loving scheme of life has made it so, and it will not be changed while time lasts.

She is thinking of Philip, I doubt not, and wondering if he still cares, and there rests in my pocket a letter from him which I have not shown her. It is a letter characteristic of the man who wrote it, a strange, partly fantastic letter, as some of his letters are, but telling of accomplishment, and an awakened sense of the beauty of life rightly lived. I read it last night after she had retired, and between the lines I could read of his strenuous efforts to achieve for her sake, and his sorrow for the wasted years before. Here is a

page of it, Little Lady, and who but a musician could have written it!

"*Dear Friend:*

"My thoughts have been full of 'Wayside' all day, I think more than ordinarily so, because of a half-waking experience which I had last night. I had worked hard yesterday with teaching and composition, and did not go to my room until late. I was very tired, and did not turn on the lights, but started a fire in the grate, and sitting down in my chair by the table, put my head upon my outstretched arms and gave myself up to retrospect.

"Suddenly the mellow tones of a clock's clear striking bell come to my half-dreaming senses plain and vibrant. It is midnight. The striking clock arouses me and I raise my head. The room is dark, save for the fitful flashes of the firelight across the floor and upon the walls. I am alone, alone with the past, which rises before me in mysterious, fantastic, phantom shapes. What moves in that dark corner over there, and what unseen creature is it which I hear breathing somewhere in the room? What goblin face is staring at me from the ceiling, and what weird eyes accuse me from the walls? What are these things, and why do they oppress me so? Is that my heart pounding away there so heavily, and how can it move with all that weary weight upon it? Yes, I know you, goblin shapes, from out the dark corners of my past. You are my sins, my unforgotten sins, which are ever present ready to torment me. I am trying to forget, but you will not have it so. My careless, wasted life, those years of no endeavor which were given me to improve, and I did not. Oh,

if I could but go back, and live those years again, and make some use of them; but it cannot be, and the hopeless shadows haunt me.

"But hark! From out the depths of the silent night a whistle comes to my listening ear, a cheery, happy, human whistle, and a voice breaks out in song — just a bar and a snatch of melody. The fire flashes up in the grate, and the room is suddenly illumined. I look again. Not a hideous form, nor a weird shape, nor a goblin face in sight. The few words of song from the street yonder are ones she used to sing, and now she comes back to me, singing, and beautiful and happy. My friends return, and happy thoughts fill the space where shadows lurked before. Her beautiful face is smiling at me from a picture upon the wall which a ray of firelight touches tenderly, and your kindly words of cheer are sounding in my consciousness. Keep heart, you say, and your own will surely come to you. I am alone no longer with the shadows, but surrounded by the jovial firelight and the visions of happiness yet to come. In the air are smiles and happy faces, in the coals are dancing sunbeams, and fairies dressed in gold and spangles and glad array. Outside the wind may blow, but in my thought is that musical whistle and the clear voice raised in song.

"There are beautiful pictures in the glowing coals, and beside me is a faint soft rustle, like the folding of a wing. Dear Kate, your presence now, as ever, drives away the shadows, and I have an indefinable feeling that I am alone no longer, but protected by an influence which I can sense but cannot see. I wonder if I am."

I refold the letter and replace it in my pocket, and busy myself in contemplation of what the future may bring to these two who are so dear to me.

Suddenly I am the possessor of untold wealth, and am also the owner of thousands of acres of land. I have unlimited power and my laws are obeyed implicitly throughout every acre of my vast domain. There is a multitude of people living in this kingdom of mine, and every one has perfect health and happiness. There are schools and churches and public libraries and baths and swimming pools. There are many small factories and numerous little shops for the interchange of commodities. There are good roads and many pleasant walks. There are small farms and innumerable gardens, where flowers bloom and vegetables grow in profusion. There are horses and carts and sheep and lowing kine.

Over the great entrance gateway is this stern demand: "Let all who enter here leave care behind," and a vigilant watchman stands guard there, armed with an infernal machine which explodes the tires upon every automobile which seeks to enter, and leaves its owner stranded and profane outside the walls. Electric lights we do not have, for we do not need them, and steam-heated buildings are unknown. No jangling telephone bell irritates the nerves of my people, and all the luxuries of modern invention are left to the world outside. The simple life is lived here, free from

care and worry and undue haste, and contentment rules, with every person as rich as his neighbor in health and strength and happiness and all that goes to make life most dear.

There are none but clean and honest people in this land of mine, because all are wise and understand the laws, obeying them from choice, and not any from compulsion. Sickness is unknown here, and our simple lives are lived close to nature and her beneficent, healing ways. Only friends abide here, and every man recognizes every other man as brother and congenial spirit. We walk and work and dance and sing, and live in the beautiful freedom of the out-of-doors. "Live right" is the motto of every soul in this kingdom of happiness, and no soul disobeys. Fear does not exist here, for love has banished it, and we pass unharmed through the summer's heat, and walk unscathed through the pelting rain. Whatever storms kind nature sends us are recognized as necessary things in the economy of life, for we know that in it and around it is the controlling power of divine Love, and every man goes on about his duties, cheerful and serene and unafraid.

This kingdom of mine has existed for, lo, these thousands of years, and never yet has a law failed or changed in its perfect operation. Souls come and go, some staying many years, and some but few; but although we rejoice to see them come, we do not grieve to see them go. We know that those who go will surely return in time, for an ir-

resistible desire has been born in them which will surely draw them back. It may be that upon their return we will not recognize them as the same souls we knew and loved before, because a change has taken place in their appearance, but we will know they are congenial, friendly souls, or they would not be here, for none other enters this land of pure content.

And so we go and come, and go and come again, and each time find this place more perfect than before. Every person works, for it is the law that no one may live here in idleness or from the fruits of another's labor. You can find no half-breathing people in this fair country, nor any whose nervous systems are out of adjustment, and there are no slaves to appetite or to desire or to King Luxury, the most inexorable tyrant of them all. Every person learns in infancy, both from precept and example, the necessity of personal knowledge of personal needs, and the fact that each must fit himself to his place in life by his own efforts.

Mankind may some day grow to that mental strength and knowledge which will enable him to find happiness and health and peace while still in the possession of the many luxuries of these later days, but we know that he has not yet arrived at that condition, and so we are happy in the simple life. Before each soul is placed the divine command, "Choose this day whom ye shall serve,"—either the complicated, complex and nerve-destroy-

ing life of modern luxury, or the simple, happy life close to nature's heart,— and upon its choice depends its destiny. If it chooses luxury, it must go outside of my domain to find it, but if it chooses health and happiness and peace and brotherhood, we have them here.

The name of this most desirable estate of mine is not emblazoned on any gorgeous sign over the entrance gate, but many small signs there are in all parts of the world telling of it, and many there be who try to find it, but they travel a road which does not lead this way. I suppose if some of them should by any chance arrive here, they would at once begin to complain of the accommodations and they would then be obliged to go elsewhere. There are plenty of children here; in fact, more children than grown-up people, and it seems to me that —

"Wake up, Uncle Jack," said Kate's voice in my ear, and a dear hand is laid upon my shoulder. I open my eyes to find myself sitting in my easy chair before the fire, and my dream of that fair country — which I think will turn out to be heaven when I find it — was over for that time.

"It was too bad to disturb you, Uncle Jack, but you looked so smiling in your sleep that I wanted you to wake up and tell me about it. Did you dream that you were a millionaire, or a hero, or had you suddenly grown famous from the doing of some great deed, and were you just listening to the plaudits of the crowd, or were the an-

gels whispering to you again, as I believe they really do sometimes?"

"No, my dear, I did not dream of any great personal accomplishment, but I did have a curious vision of happiness which came from simple and honest living. I do not believe that real happiness comes from the great things so much as from the little things of life, the ordinary, every-day duties and joys and incidents. If we live as we should live, we can count it all joy, whatever comes to us, and sometimes the most uneventful life is the most really successful one.

"Always remember this, my dear: success cannot be measured in great deeds or much riches. I hold that person to be successful who has lived cleanly, honestly, healthily and modestly; who has labored cheerfully, continuously and willingly; who has provided reasonably against old age and want and the exigencies of accident; who has spread the gospel of sunshine and cheerfulness and usefulness; who has recognized the beauty of the universe in star and plant and flower, in all animal life, and in every human soul; who has grown mentally in harmony with the good in the great scheme of life, and who has made progress toward that kingdom of strong and valiant souls which shall one day inherit the harmony and the beauty and the happiness of the loving divine plan."

CHAPTER IX

Again there are gathered in the living room at "Wayside" my company of friends, Charles and Robert, with Harry and Mabel and Kate. We have had an evening of song and story, and now the talk has drifted into religious subjects, as it is apt to do here. Harry has just said to Robert,

"Suppose a man who had never heard of our religion should ask you why we base our belief upon the supernatural inspiration of the Bible, and request you to tell him how the Bible came to be; what would you answer him?"

"If I wished to tell him the whole truth," said Robert, "I should answer him something like this: After the great Roman Emperor Constantine had been converted to the Christian faith, and it was desired to give that faith official recognition, a convention was called at Nicea, where delegates from the different scattered bodies of believers met to effect a church organization, and decide upon what teachings should be accepted, and what manuscripts should be chosen as official church doctrines. The faith of these Christians was founded upon the life and words and deeds of a Great Teacher who had risen in Galilee some hun-

dreds of years before, and who for three years had taught a new faith, and proclaimed a new law. He made many converts among the people, and years after his death numerous persons wrote manuscripts purporting to contain a record of his deeds and sayings, which up to that time had been verbally handed down. A great pile of these manuscripts was gathered together at this convention at Nicea, and from them the delegates proceeded to select what suited their purpose. This convention was a riotous affair. Oaths were uttered and blows were struck before a majority could agree upon what manuscript to accept and what to reject. Finally a list was adopted, and from this list comes the book we call the Bible.

"The Emperor Constantine caused a new calendar to be made dating from the time, as near as could be arrived at, of the birth of this Teacher of Galilee, and by this calendar the convention at Nicea was held in the year 325 after the Great Teacher's birth. Now, there was at that time no such thing as vowel letters, no such thing as punctuation marks, and no such thing as capital letters. The manuscripts all consisted of rows of consonant letters strung together continuously from right to left across the sheet, with no divisions between the letters. Later, as these original manuscripts were worn out or became mutilated, copies were made by copyists, and the original manuscript was destroyed. Finally, after the invention of vowels and capitals and

punctuation marks, these manuscripts were transcribed into words and sentences, and later were translated into different languages.

"No one knows how many times these writings were copied upon new manuscript, or by whom or when the work was done. All that we do know is that for one thousand years after this convention at Nicea the church was the sole custodian of these writings, and that no manuscript is now in existence which was made earlier than 700 years after the date of the beginning of the new calendar. No one knew then, and no one knows now, who wrote the original manuscripts, or at what time or where they were written. This is the origin of the book which orthodoxy now claims is the literally inspired Word of God, and this is the foundation upon which the claim rests."

"Well, it does not seem to me," said Harry, "that your argument would prove very convincing to the outsider of the real supernatural quality of our Scripture, and I suppose that is the reason why ministers who know never mention these things to their congregations, for the world may not be ready yet for this kind of knowledge. I have often wondered why it was that there were no books in the library here at 'Wayside' bearing upon religious subjects except those written by Bible scholars and friends to the orthodox creed. Considering the liberal views of its owner, I should suppose that he would want to read the infidel side also."

"No," I said, "I have never read infidel books, for I perfectly agree with that passage of Scripture which declares that 'it is only the fool who says in his heart there is no God.' How any man can live in this beautiful world, and see before him and on every side the wonderful processes of nature, and not feel the presence of nature's God; how he can read the remarkable discoveries of recent science, and not see the overwhelming evidence of method and order and harmony, and the presence of intelligent purpose in creation, I fail utterly to comprehend.

"There lives no man more willing to bow his reverential head in adoration before the omnipresence of the Almighty than I, and no amount of argument could shake my faith in the reality of an infinite Deity, which doeth all things well. Through all my senses the conviction comes home to my soul, and I feel the pressure of the infinite Being upon my own being, and my faith is born of certainty.

"It is only with man-made theology that I disagree. The underlying basic facts of God and the human soul, of salvation and the immortal life, I fully believe in, and am as confident of as any man can be. My faith is not a matter of ordinary volition with me, and unless a thing looks reasonable to me, and I can conceive it, I cannot say that I believe it. I am glad to say that I do not possess a simple faith, for simple faith to my

mind is but another name for simple credulity.

"If I told you that I went out into the street this morning and flapped my arms and flew up into the air and away for a hundred miles and back in ten minutes' time, and you believed me, that would be simple faith, also credulity. If I told that story to a child, and it believed me, you would say that it believed because of its undeveloped mental powers and its ignorance of the common laws of life. If a grown person believed it, we would say that that person's mind was weak and not capable of good judgment, and yet in all cases belief in this impossible thing would be a simple faith in my truthfulness. Now, why not apply this same reasoning to every impossible story which is told us, no matter by whom, for all stories or theories come to us through the medium of some other human being?

"I base my personal belief upon the knowledge that it fits the facts of life as far as I know them, and makes absolute justice in every instance. I believe that the infinite divisibility of matter is a scientific fact; that evolution of the physical form is a scientific fact; that evolution of the mental into a central self-consciousness is a scientific fact; that the law of attraction of congenial atoms is a scientific fact; that the immanence and control of mind in matter is a scientific fact; that the presence of purpose in creation is a plain and certain fact of nature, and that the attraction of

the persisting consciousness to a congenial environment is a reasonable thing, and there is no reason to doubt its being a fact.

"When I tell of the things which I believe, my orthodox brother is ready to receive me into fellowship, but when I tell him of the things which I do not believe, he is ready to show me the door. Yet I suppose that if my orthodox brother and myself were to sit down together and calmly compare our theories of life, we would find that we were not so very far apart, after all, and that in the essential things we were in agreement.

"We both believe that there is an infinite, intelligent, creative, and controlling Power in the universe, which is omnipresent, omnipotent, and omniscient; which has created all things; and which governs all things; and which we both designate as God. He believes that this God is a Person, a great infinite Man, who resides in some particular place away from this world, but comes here once in a while to regulate matters when they go wrong. He believes that God radiates his influence from a central Presence, which he will some day see and know. I believe that this omnipresent creating and guiding Power is not centralized nor limited at any point into a manlike body, but is universal, continuous and immanent in the world and universe. I cannot believe in the manlike body, because I cannot conceive of God having limitations, which a body would necessitate.

"We both believe that there is a God-created

something in the being of man which survives death and the dissolution of the visible, physical body. He believes that this something is an invisible and inconceivable thing, which is created suddenly and put into each new body by an arbitrary fiat of God, and taken out again suddenly, at death, in the same way. I believe that this something is grown and developed in the physical body by the evolving and growing processes of God, and that when one physical body is disintegrated, it is attracted into another, and another, until it has at length grown into the strength necessary for immortality.

"We both believe that this continuing something retains its identity and its memory after it leaves the physical body. He believes that in some mysterious and unthinkable manner this something goes direct to eternal happiness or eternal sorrow in some way and place which he cannot comprehend. I believe that this something does not go to some unthinkable place, but comes back into birth in this life as it is, with the good or evil inclinations or propensities which it has developed here, and it thus has another chance to grow into harmony with its Creator in the same kind of life in which all its growth has been made.

"We both believe in the forgiveness of sin, or the doing away of inharmony. He believes that this is a sudden operation, performed in some miraculous and inconceivable manner by arbitrary

fiat. I believe that forgiveness can only come gradually, through growth and development into harmony with the divine environment.

"We both believe in immortality. He believes that it is handed out suddenly by arbitrary fiat. I believe that it is grown into by steady and continuous development.

"We both believe that the persisting something is provided with some kind of a body after it leaves the physical one at death. He believes it will be some strange kind of a body which he cannot describe or conceive. I believe that it will be just the same sort of a physical body which it knows now, in which it has grown and developed, and in which it has had all its life experience.

"We both believe that right living and right thinking bring salvation. He believes also in the necessity of a number of rites and ceremonies, and the necessity of belief in certain miraculous events and happenings. I fail to see the importance of any one of these things. My belief is that we have no more reason to go outside of our knowledge in these matters than in any other. We have no reason to declare these things out of adjustment with all the laws as we know them and see them working before our eyes every day. We should fit our theory of the things beyond to the facts about things as we know them now. There is no reason to believe that God is not continuous, constant and unchangeable.

"These wonder tales and miracles were no

doubt necessary in the early ages of mental development, but persisting humanity must outgrow them, as it must outgrow a great many other beliefs and superstitions which have become incredible in the light of advancing revelation. We do not believe to-day that the world is flat, and that the sun is pulled across it once in every twenty-four hours for the sole purpose of giving it light. There are a great many other things which were believed in the ancient days which to-day we know are not true, and we are being forced to change our theories to fit our growing knowledge of the facts. So it must be with all remaining superstition and also with all belief in miracles in the sense that God's unchangeable laws were ever changed, in any instance, to fit the convenience of any human being. The day of miracle is now as much as it ever was, and there are just as many miracles being performed to-day before our very eyes as were ever performed in the history of the world.

"I do not believe that anything is ever handed to us arbitrarily from the outside, but that all that comes to us comes under the law, in the regular order of cause and effect. We must both come to realize that our health, our happiness and our destiny are in our own hands, and governed by laws which we can see and understand. If we attain the mental condition of happiness in this life, by what process of reasoning can we arrive at the conclusion that it will be taken away from us after we leave the physical and dwell in a mental

world? Why will it be taken away simply because we have not been able to believe some mysterious and unthinkable thing which some other man, with no better authority than our own, has told us we must believe?

"If anything persists after death, it must of necessity be a mental thing, and it must of necessity preserve its memory; otherwise it would not be we, nor anything that we could conceive. If the mentality which persists has pleasant memories of this life and nothing else, how will it be possible to make it unhappy? There is no reason for believing that there is something weird, fantastic, inconceivable and different which is in the body now, but we know nothing of it, and which will last over out of the body in some unthinkable way, and be done something to, good or bad, by some unknown Person in some inconceivable manner, continually forever. It does not make sense.

"We both believe in inspiration and revelation. He believes that God picked out certain favorite individuals some thousands of years ago, and in a supernatural and miraculous manner revealed to them his truths, and that then inspiration and revelation ceased for all time. I believe that God never has had any favorites in that sense of the word, but that he has revealed his truth to every living soul, according to its ability to perceive and receive. I believe that the voice of God is continuous, and has been through all time, and that revelation is a continuing process."

"Well, I must confess," said Robert, "that your theory has a great attraction for me, not only because it seems reasonable, but because the after life, as you picture it, would be to me most desirable. I have often had in my secret consciousness a serious doubt as to whether the orthodox immortality would, after all, prove to be a desirable thing. Unless I lose after this death-change my present inclinations and desires, and also lose the memory of some of my present friends and companions whom I now love, but who under the orthodox theory could not possibly be saved, I know that I could not be happy continually in any place where I must lose all hope for them. Neither could I be eternally happy in eternal idleness.

"But if I feel that I am to live again the life that I know, under whatever just conditions I have made for myself, then I have a very decided incentive to live right now, and if I do this, I can look forward to a life from which all mystery and doubt and superstition has been eliminated, and where only even level justice follows me through all eternity, and where there is a certainty of hope for every soul with perfect confidence and trust.

"I am persuaded that the tendency is to forget the bad and remember the good as we grow better and stronger, and in this way a perfect salvation from evil may come to us in that good time when evil causes cease in our personal lives, for we will

have then only happy memories. We receive a hint of this in this life, for as the years pass, the troubles and trials and sorrows of past life gradually fade away and disappear, while the good and the pleasure remain with us always. We can make of this life a romantic adventure if we understand and obey the laws, and a life without romance would be a life without interest. This life is a life of sentiment, and to those who think most deeply is sentiment most dear. It is to those happy incidents of life into which romance and sentiment have entered that we love best to turn for comfort and consolation in our hours of retrospect, and that man is poor indeed to whom romance has not come at some period in his life."

"Yes," said Charles, "that is so, and romance and sentiment are but twin sisters going down life's pathway hand in hand, for when you find one you are sure to find the other.

"To-day, in my reading, I came across this remark: 'But believe me, there is nothing after all more fairly distributed than romance. God has been generous of it, and there are few who sometime, for a moment, have not been touched with the wand,— few of us, commonplace, tired and sordid, who have not somewhere within us a memory glowing pale, like the petals of a rose.' And as I look down into the secret chambers of my heart, where I keep my treasures safe from prying eyes, I find its confirmation. My friends, shall I lift the veil for a moment, and give you a

glimpse into one of these holy places from which I draw the inspiration of what good is in me?

"Just back yonder in that great yesterday, when I was young and full of the dreams of youth, I lived for a time in the northern pine woods, and was a timber cruiser, as they were called, a searcher after the best pine for lumbering purposes. One day I heard of a valuable tract of timber about forty miles 'down shore,' and I knew that the easiest and quickest way to reach it was by boat to a point on the lake as near as possible, and then a pack trip inland. It was also said that one of the millionaire lumbermen of the northwest was after it, and if he or his men reached it first I had no chance in the race. So I fitted out my small sailboat and started at once, alone, in an effort to be the first upon the scene.

"Starting early in the morning, with favoring wind and fortune, I reached in good time my destination upon the lake, and pulling my boat into a safe anchorage, I swung my pack upon my back and started out, intending to pass the night in an old abandoned lumber camp I knew was near. As I pushed my way steadily through the dense underbrush, I came suddenly out into a little clearing, and a strange vision met my astonished eyes. Seated upon a fallen tree, in an attitude of utter dejection, was a young lady, and my first glance showed me by her dress, her attitude, and that indescribable something which surrounds the cultured that she belonged to wealth and plenty

and prosperity. Her hands covered her face, and she was crying bitterly.

"As I gazed at her a moment in silence, almost afraid to speak for fear the vision would vanish into thin air, she raised her head and saw me. A smile like sunshine broke instantly through the rain of tears and with a sobbing catch in her voice she said,

"'Oh, I'm so glad. It's all right now, isn't it?'

"'Well, I hope so,' I said, 'but what was the trouble a moment ago?'

"'Why, I was lost and tired and wet and cold and hungry.'

"'Is that all?' I said. 'Well, you are found, and the rest of it can soon be fixed, but how came you here?'

"'I am Miss ——, and my father's yacht is down there somewhere in a little bay, and he and his men are out looking at pine land, and I wandered away for a walk and got lost, and it commenced to get dark, and I was awfully afraid until you came.'

"As she looked at me, smiling through her tears, I thought she was the most beautiful being I had ever seen, and I knew that her father was the millionaire lumberman who was after my land, and I also knew that the little bay she spoke of was only a few rods away, just beyond the hill. Should I take her there at once, or should I build a fire and get supper, and see what manner of

angel this was which the gods had sent me. The charm of her presence and her evident trust in me were too strong for me to resist, and throwing my pack upon the ground, I started in to build a fire, and make her as comfortable as possible for the present. I told her that we could not very well reach the boat right away, but that I knew where it was, and as soon as she was rested and warmed and dry, I would take her there.

"'All right,' she said, and as I busied myself with preparations for her comfort, we spoke but little.

"Almost unconsciously I found myself preparing two beds of fragrant pine boughs, instead of one, and gradually the conviction came to me that we would not find the yacht that night, but she should be as safe and unafraid there in the silent forest with me as though in her father's house and care.

"No bed ever made by man is more downy, fragrant or sleep producing than a properly made one of pine boughs, and I thought thankfully that I had with me two sets of blankets instead of one, as sometimes, and that one pair were the beautiful red ones of which I was so proud, also that my wood suit was new, and that my provisions were plentiful and fresh. After the beds were prepared and the blankets thrown upon them (for these things must be done before the dark catches you in the deep woods), I set about preparing supper — for two.

"The girl had watched my work with eager interest, occasionally asking some question, and laughing a glad little rippling laugh, like the trill of a bird, as she grew warm and dry, and comfortable. Presently supper was ready, and we ate it together, as happy and care-free as two children, which indeed we were. She told me of her home, and of this trip and others like it, which she enjoyed the most of anything in life. She was in love with the outdoors, as I was, and she was as pure and innocent as God's daughters ought of right to be. I told her of my life and hopes and aims, of what I hoped to do, and what I hoped to be. She told me she was sure that I would succeed.

"After supper I told her that we could not find the boat that night but that she need not be afraid, for I would take care of her.

"'Afraid,' she said, 'why, it never entered my mind to fear after you came.'

"So I told her that I would go down to the little stream near by, and get some water, and while I was gone for her to go to bed in the red blankets, and when she was ready, to call, and I would come.

"At her call I came back, and sitting there in the firelight, we talked until far into the night. At last she asked me by what name my friends called me.

"'Well,' I said, 'my acquaintances call me

Charles, my friends call me Charlie, and a very few who love me best call me Chum.'

"She said, 'My name is Alice, my friends call me Allie, and some few who love me call me Dear.'

"'Well, good night, Dear,' I said, and hesitating a moment,

"'Good night, Chum,' she said, and buried her face from my sight.

"Ah, me! I remember, as though it were yesterday, the thrill which came over me as she said those words, and as I laid down to sleep, I registered a vow to be worthy of her confidence and trust.

"Early in the morning I arose, and replenishing the fire, I went again to the small river for my morning liquid devotions. When I returned she was up and sitting by the fire, and she greeted me cheerily. After breakfast was eaten, she helped me take care of the dishes and pack the pack, taking a lively interest in it all. I then announced that we would find her father's boat.

"Leaving the pack and blankets where they were, we started out, but first away from the boat instead of toward it. As we walked slowly along together, it may be that I lingered just a little at those moments when I had to take her hand to help her over some fallen tree, or place my extended arm near her to ward off some too familiar branch. At last, by a circuitous route, we reached a little open space, and there just below

us was the bay, and her father's yacht, at anchor.

"'Now, good-bye, Dear,' I said; 'I must leave you here,' and taking her hand, I raised it to my lips and turned to go. As I parted the branches at the edge of the clearing to go back into the forest, I looked around, realizing that she had spoken no word of good-bye. She stood as I had left her, but the tears were running down her face, and behind them was a look in her eyes which a man sees not often in this life, and then only to his good. Without a word I turned, and retracing my steps, took her into my arms and covered her upturned, beautiful, willing face with kisses. All at once I realized that my kisses were being returned, and that she was clinging to me with all her strength.

"How long we stood there thus, I do not know. I do not care to know. I only know that heaven can hold no joy greater than that I then experienced. At length I knew that I must go, and with a last caress I tenderly, but firmly, released those sweet clinging arms, and bid her once more good-bye.

"'Good-bye, Chum,' she said. 'You will come back to me, won't you?'

"'Yes, Dear,' I said. 'I will.'

"This time, not trusting myself to give a backward glance, I went straight into the forest to my pack and away. I never saw her again.

"Many times I have wondered what the outcome would have been if I had yielded to my de-

sire and gone to her. She was a millionaire's daughter and I had nothing, having broken away from all home ties, resolved and determined to make my own way alone and unaided. The next night by my lonely camp fire I made my fight and came to my conclusion. I would not go to her until I could offer her the same comforts and luxuries to which she was accustomed. I would not even communicate with her. I would not seek to take advantage of a momentary grateful impulse of which she did not and could not realize the significance.

"Yet I loved her. In that hour and at that time, no man ever loved a woman more. She filled my mind and thought for days and weeks and months. Through all the years of my life her memory has helped to keep me clean and honest and nearer to God. It will go with me to the end, and in heaven will be one of my joys forever.

"It was a perfect experience; there was no after circumstances to mar its perfect harmony. My memory of her is only as she stood there that morning, beautiful, innocent, and trusting. In a sacred corner of my heart I hold her thus forever."

CHAPTER X

There is music and dancing again in the old house at "Wayside," Little Lady, and the place is filled with Kate's friends and mine. Up in the third story the young people are enjoying themselves in their own way, and down in the great living room the fathers and mothers are gathered for the kind of enjoyment more suited to their age and habits of life. The sounds of laughter and merry voices of the young float down the wide stairway from the rooms above, calling up the memories of those past happy days when these same fathers and mothers met in this same old house years ago, and enjoyed themselves in this same way in which their happy children are now doing. We have not lacked for music and singing also below stairs, but now we are gathered about the open fire, and the talk has turned to other things. There has been some discussion as to the proper training of the young, and Charles is telling his opinions.

"I believe fully in the living of the simple life," said he, "and the inestimable value of fresh air and rational exercise in God's great, beautiful out-of-doors. If all children could have the advantage of the association of green fields and

shady woods, and if they were taught by competent instructors the plain and simple rules of right living, there would be, in my opinion, much less need of criminal courts and prisons, or of medicines and physicians. The first few years of life are more important than is usually appreciated. Some one has said, 'Give me the first ten years of a child's life, and I care not who has the remainder,' and to a great degree this is true, for the impressions, beliefs and qualities which are then built into the mind of the growing child cling to it through life, and influence all of its actions. That child is fortunate indeed who is brought up under the influence of a good home, and especially with the care of a good and loving mother. No power for good in the world excels the blessed influence of a good mother over the minds of her children, and no matter how long they may live, nor into what far country their destiny calls them, the tender power of a mother's love is continually calling them to a right life, and into ways which lead to happiness."

"My own case," said I, "is an exact illustration of that fact. My father was a stern, unyielding church Christian, and he would have every other person be a Christian, with his ideas, and a church member, even if a club had to be used to persuade him. He would reach the kingdom of heaven by militant processes if no others seemed adequate. His word was law, and there was no avoiding it. He had outgrown childish points of

view, and could not sympathize with youthful spirits. He was very strict in his observance of the Sabbath, and would tolerate no amusement on that day. Upon one occasion I had been invited by our nearest neighbor's young people to attend a little impromptu picnic in the woods near our house on a Sunday afternoon, and had accepted the invitation. When my father learned of my intention he sternly forbade me to go, and read me a severe lecture upon what he termed my wickedness.

"I had long been restive under what I considered an unnecessary restraint, and this decided me to leave home. I made my arrangements carefully and quietly, making up a small bundle and hiding it under a lilac bush at the corner of the house, where I could get it when I slipped out after every one was asleep.

"After the house was still I arose and dressed, and taking my shoes in my hand, crept down the stairs, opened and closed the outside door softly, and tiptoed around to the lilac bush — to find my mother standing there, dressed just as she had been in the afternoon.

"'Well, my boy,' she said, 'were you really intending to run away without a good-bye or a kiss from Mother? You had better think better of it and go back to bed, but if you are determined to go, let us have a talk together first?'

"She picked up the little bundle, and we walked together out the front gate, and down the road a

short distance to where a great log was lying by the roadside. She sat down upon the log and drew me down beside her. How long we talked there I do not know, but I can remember her earnest words of advice, and I can almost feel her dear hand upon my shoulder as it was that night. When I arose at last to go, she put her arms around me and kissed me good-bye, and the last words were spoken as she looked into my eyes while tears stood in her own.

"'I am not afraid that my boy will forget me or my teaching, but wherever he may go I will trust him to be clean and honest and honorable, and to do nothing of which either he or I need to be ashamed.' Then, as she slipped a bill into my hand, she held me close for a moment silently, and I knew that she was praying for my safety and welfare.

"I can see her now as she stood there then, my beautiful, dainty mother, who was in all of her life as near to the angels as it is given for mortals to be. Hers was the rule of love, and I cannot remember now that she ever talked anything but kindness and happiness. I went my way with my heart full of love for my mother, but also with my mind full of bitterness against the iron rule of my father.

"Being strong and willing, I soon obtained work, and wrote regularly to my mother, and I found out afterwards that she had told the whole story to my father, who decided that, as I went

away of my own free will, I could return in the same way. I stayed away for many years, although after the first year I often went home to visit and was received as cordially as though my leaving had been in the ordinary natural course of events. Years afterward I found that my father had secretly kept well informed of my welfare without my knowledge.

"At last I drifted into the West, and at one time lived for two years in a rough little western city, where I fell in with a number of associates who were careless in their habits and conduct. These young men drank some, and swore, and played cards for money, and did other things which they had no right to do. To be sociable, I joined them in the card playing, first innocently, then a regular poker game for money, and at last found myself playing in a game one Sunday afternoon in an upper room in a small hotel where we all boarded. I had been somewhat fortunate, and my winnings were upon the table before me when, as I laid down my hand for a moment and leaned back against the open window just behind me, a woman's voice came to my ear singing a hymn. It was a hymn my mother often sang, and the voice sounded like hers.

"Instantly the picture of my mother came up before me, as she stood there that night of our parting, with the moonlight shining upon her tender face, and her sweet voice was saying, 'I will trust my boy to be clean and honest and honor-

able.' I closed my eyes, and again the words of the hymn came to me faint but clear. 'Cover my defenseless head with the shadow of thy wing,' sang the voice, and I opened my eyes and looked around the room. Pipes, cigars, cards, and beer bottles were scattered around, and the room was blue with smoke, while the coarse conversation of my associates jarred upon my newly awakened sense of right. Rising, I said,

"'Right here I quit this game now and forever, and whoever owns this money which I have won may have it, for I will have nothing to do with it.'

"One of the young men made a sneering remark, but another took it up for me.

"'He is right,' he said, 'and I propose to join him. I have had enough of this sort of thing myself, and will leave it now for good.'

"We left the room together, and once outside he asked me how I came to my sudden resolution, and I told him.

"'I am glad that you did it,' he said, 'for I just needed some one to speak up as you did to decide me. I knew that we were not doing right, but I did not have the courage to break away, but now that I have announced myself I will stick to it.'

"Many times in my after-life my resolution of that Sunday afternoon gave me the strength to decide against some action which I knew was not right, and often in an hour of temptation has

there come up before me the picture of my mother with that look of love upon her face, and her voice has mentally reached me across the silence of the years, 'I will trust my boy to be clean and honest and honorable.'

"In all my hours of sorrow and trial, the memory of my dear, patient, self-sacrificing mother has helped me to be strong, and in my dreams her presence has come to me like a benediction out of the memories of the past. My life with her and with my beautiful, perfect wife has blessed all womankind for me, and I owe them a debt of gratitude which I never will be able to repay. Up in the room which I still occupy, I slept as a child, and it is hallowed still by a mother's indefinable presence, although her physical form has been long absent. Sometimes I wake in the silent night, filled with the sense that my mother has been there bending over me as of yore, to see if all were well with the child, and that her dear hand has just arranged the blankets for my comfort, or smoothed my pillow with her loving touch. Here where I am sitting to-night, I have often knelt by her knee in the old days to repeat my evening prayer, or to pour out my childish griefs into her sympathizing ear. I sometimes think that this dear memory, so clear and strong, can never leave me, no matter what life I lead, through all eternity."

"I often wonder," said Charles, "if we do not sometimes remember in a faint and uncertain

way some incident or circumstance of a former existence in some other life. To most people there comes at times a dim sense of remembrance which tells them that they have had, at some time too far off to be located, an experience similar to the present one, and could it not be possible that a sense of recollection should come from the subconscious memory of a long-past physical life? Sometimes one sense brings this feeling to us, and sometimes another,— something indefinitely familiar in the vision of things, or perhaps a sound, or a smell, which tells us of something far away in the past which we have known or experienced, but which we cannot place in this present physical life."

"I know the feeling you mean," said Robert, "but I believe it comes from and applies to an experience in this life which lies in the background of our memory, ready to come forward when circumstances warrant. The perfume of a certain flower always brings to my consciousness an incident of my young manhood, the memory of which is so dear, and yet so bitter sweet, that I hesitate to tell of it, and yet when I go down along the shaded paths of memory I always find it there among my most cherished possessions.

"Trailing arbutus, that lovely fragrant flower of early spring,— I never see it, I never catch a breath of its perfume, I never think of it, that there does not come back to me this memory of long ago. I was attending school in a university

town, and was boarding in a private family with a lawyer and his wife. He was a careless man in his domestic relations, seeming to really care little for his pretty and dainty young wife, and being absorbed in his business, his clubs, his sports, and his outside associates, he utterly neglected to bestow upon her those attentions and courtesies which are evidences of affection, and for which every woman's heart hungers. He appeared to care little what she did or how she passed her life, so long as she did not interfere with his selfish pleasures, or make demand upon his time.

"She loved books, as I did; she loved the out-of-doors, as I did; she loved the woods and flowers, as I did, and naturally, having tastes in common, we were thrown together in a friendly way, but never, by so much as a word or look or thought, had there been aught between us which the whole wide world might not have known up to that day which marks for me a color spot in memory.

"We had been talking one evening about the early summer flowers, and I had said that I had seen that day some fresh trailing arbutus, and I thought I would go out next day to the woods and find some. She said,

"'I want to go. John, will you go with me to-morrow?'

"'No, I care nothing for it,' he said. 'You go with Robert; he will take you all right.'

"'Certainly,' I said, 'if you are willing.'

"'Willing?' he said. 'What do you suppose I care where you go?'

"We drove out into the country and to some woods I knew of where trailing arbutus grew, and soon we had filled our basket with the beautiful, fragrant flowers. We stood listening to the birds singing, and inhaling the sweet, pure air of a perfect day, one of those days when heaven and earth draw near together. She said,

"'Oh, I wish John liked the things I do.' And then, as the tears came into her eyes, all her pent-up feelings broke their bounds, and she was pouring out her heart's sadness to my listening ears.

"'You dear girl,' I said, 'I wish that I had known you first,' and I took her into my arms.

"The basket of arbutus fell to the ground, and for one brief moment the whole wide earth was forgotten. Only a moment, when honor came knocking at my soul, persistent, insistent, strident,— not to be denied,— and I turned from her, picked up the basket without a word, and started toward the carriage.

"We spoke but little on the homeward drive, and then only of other things. The next day I packed my belongings and left the house, and went to live in another part of the city. I did not dare to stay, for in that After Time I will have no woman's voice be my accuser. This I have escaped so far, thank God, and no woman can face me in the Great Beyond, and say I wronged her.

"So when even a faint scent of arbutus comes to my senses, there comes back to me the memory of that day when impulse and inclination struggled in the depths of my soul with right and honor, and almost gained a victory. But honor won, and so there comes only to me with that memory the songs of happy birds, the fragrant scent of flowers, mingled with a certain keen regret that life should have used this woman so, driving her, I fully believe, almost against her will to turn for sympathy to one who had no right to offer it to her. All of these faint remembrances which you speak of could be traced, I believe, to some half-forgotten incident in this present life, and not to any other."

"Well, that may be," said Charles. "I do not know; but this I do believe, that when we have left this body and gone into the non-physical time, be it long or short, it is only by such individual experience as this you mention that we will know that we are we, and not some other. By some experience which is ours alone and different from the rest is the only way we will know ourselves outside of the physical, as it is now in the physical. We are making that individual experience every day of life, and upon our decisions at such times as this will depend how much that after-life will hold for us of heaven or of hell.

"Suppose a man should be taken with a sort of paralysis, and his sense of hearing should be lost. All he would then know about sound would

be his memory of sounds which he had heard in the past, and his memory would call them up. Suppose he then should lose his sight. He then could have no new sight experience, but his memory would be busy calling up what he had seen in the past. Suppose this paralysis should extend to his sense of smell, then to his sense of taste, and then at last to his sense of touch. He would have lost absolutely the power of physical sensation. His entire body would be paralyzed, dead to all outside sensation of any kind; but he would perfectly remember all of these things, hearing, sight, smell, taste and touch. Do you not see that he would exist only in his memory of his past experience?

"This person would be what we call dead, which only means that he has lost the power of physical sensation or experience, but is living in his mind, his memory, as much as ever. Now, this is what death means, or it means nothing but pure extinction. If anything survives death, it is this ability to remember, to think over the past, and if this persists, it is working perfectly. The mind can remember all of its past experience, but is incapable of having any new or different experience outside of the physical.

"That is all there is to it. We just stop having new experience, and remember perfectly the past. Isn't that a simple proposition? So we can see just what we are doing every hour and day and minute,— making experience to remem-

ber in that 'other world' which is not somewhere else, but here, as much as the man would be here that I have been speaking of. When that time comes, if we have pleasant things to remember, clean, happy and good things, we will be happy in remembrance. As we have sown, so shall we surely reap. We do not live each hour just for that hour alone, but for the eternity of time in which we shall remember it. So we can see how we can cast out fear, which is the most disturbing element in life. Simply live right and think right, and there can be nothing whatsoever to fear. What should we fear except the harvest? Why not, then, sow such seed as shall bring us a harvest of only happy things, a remembrance of happy things?

"There is no mystery about this matter, and there is no necessity for mystery. We can make our memory what we please, and the power to remember is all there is to it. What others do is nothing to us. It is our own mental attitude and our own manner of thinking which we must look out for, because the only salvation possible under heaven and among men is a clean and perfect memory of happy things. This cannot be given us from outside, but we must grow it ourselves, by personal effort, on the inside."

"It seems to me," I said, "that there is no escape from the natural logic of that position, and if we wish to base our belief upon our reason and the evidences of our senses, and not upon some

superstitious tradition of the ages, we will be obliged to acknowledge its truth. I have been many years arriving at my present convictions, but through wide reading and much study my faith is at last founded upon the rock of common sense, from which it would be impossible to remove it. I have desired to find only the truth, and in this theory I think that I have found it.

"I believe that the law of attraction is dominant in the finer mental world, and that the organized mental consciousness, when released from the physical body at death, not only holds together and persists, but is attracted into surroundings and environment which are congenial to it. Thus it will be attracted to an evil environment just in proportion as it has evil in its makeup, evil inclinations, evil propensities and evil desires, and it will be attracted to a good environment just in proportion to the good which it has developed in itself. I believe this because I believe that no outside power sends it anywhere by arbitrary fiat or force, but that every consciousness is left free, under the law, to follow its own inclinations in the same way that it has done in the physical life. Thus every consciousness makes its own judgment under the undeviating law of God. It invariably reaps as it has sown, and absolute justice is meted out to every soul alike. If it has evil inclinations and desires, it goes into evil surroundings, and gains a birth into another body in those surroundings. If it has good inclina-

tions and desires, it goes into good environment, and gains a birth in that environment. In no other way can I make justice in the fact of the difference in birth conditions, and under no other theory can I solve the problem to my own satisfaction of the savage and of the child which meets an early death.

"If the soul of the savage is sent to hell because of its ignorance and unbelief, then what becomes of the love and the justice of God? And if the soul of the savage is suddenly saved because of its ignorance, then why carry any gospel message to it, and thus imperil it through knowledge? But if the soul of the savage is only our younger brother, and has the same chance to grow and develop in life after life that every soul has, then that theory makes, to my mind, reason and justice and harmony with the great law of life.

"If the soul of the child which dies after a few days or weeks or months of this physical life goes straight to heaven and happiness, and the experience of a physical life is not necessary to it, then why not allow all the children to die in infancy, and thus surely save their souls? And why should I be given nearly a hundred years of physical life, with its temptations, its dangers and its uncertainties, if the physical life has no object, or is of no use to me? Either the child is deprived of a necessary condition for its growth and development, or I am made to take an unneces-

sary risk, a risk which carries the vast majority of souls to an endless hell. I utterly fail to be able to make that theory give God the justice which he must have to command my love and respect.

"But if the child soul is not cheated out of its chance for the necessary physical life experience, but is given all the physical lives necessary,— some short, some long, it may be,— it matters not, for it has the same opportunity for growth and development that every soul has, and reaches heaven at last in exactly the same way that every other soul does.

"It makes very little difference to me whether this theory is accepted or believed by any other person or not. It makes justice and sense and harmony to my mind as no other theory does. Either God has control over birth and death, or unchangeable law is in control. If these things are controlled by the arbitrary fiat of God, then he is not a just God, and does not give every soul an even chance; but if the unchangeable law of God is in control, and the soul goes where attraction calls it, then even level justice rules at the world's heart, and every soul receives exactly its own, reaping as it has sown. There is no circumstance or condition of life which this theory does not fit and make reasonable, and I know of no fact in life which contradicts it. If it is not so, then everything happens just as though it was so, and as a consequence I am willing to accept it.

"The theory that we are to be handed at some time in the future, probably just after death, a different sort of life from what we know now, more happiness or more misery, and experience a different way of living it, I do not believe, and I can see no reason why any one else should believe it. Right here and now is the time given us to live, and if we do not get the good out of it, and appreciate it, the fault is entirely with ourselves. We will never have a better chance to live than we have right here to-day.

"And so I believe in the fact of physical evolution,— that the physical form of man has evolved through countless time from the primary single cell,— and beyond that we do not need to go. I believe it because the theory makes sense and is reasonable, and all known facts point to it as true. I believe it because I can understand it and see how it can be so.

"I believe that matter or substance itself is indestructible and immortal; that forms and combinations change, but the amount of substance is always and forever the same. I believe that matter or substance is controlled in its combinations and in all ways by its mentality, its mind side, which is its finer manifestation, and that every visible physical form is composed of dense mental substance which is visible and fine mental substance which is invisible, the finer combining, building and controlling the denser, and thereby organizing a controlling combination of fine mental substance

which develops a nervous system and a central dominating combination, acquiring at last the power of individual thought and ability to persist. I believe that memory is the binding force which holds this finer organization together, a memory of mutual congenial experience in the physical life, and that the attraction of kindred atoms holds together this central entity until it finally achieves the power of thinking for itself and a coherence sufficient to defy the disintegration of the dense physical body. I believe this because it makes sense and is reasonable, and all known facts point to its truth. I believe it because I can understand it and see how it can be so.

"I believe that physical evolution is not yet complete, but the physical and mental evolution will continue on together, as the finer and the denser manifestations of the same thing, until man's physical body will be in such harmonious relation to its environment, and the persisting mentality, the ego, controlling the body will have acquired such a knowledge of the laws of environment, and developed such wisdom and such desire of right living that the continuance of the physical form will be indefinitely prolonged,— the ego ever gaining strength and wisdom, the denser form ever getting more harmonious with its environment. I believe this because underlying the universe is the fact of growth and development which can only result in better conditions and longer, fuller and more perfect life.

"I believe that as man grows more in accord with the higher laws of being, as he gets farther and farther away from his animal inheritance, his physical body will grow finer and finer and less gross, and he will develop powers in the physical which would be regarded as miraculous to-day. We get occasional glimpses of these latent powers in mental healing, in mind reading, and in spiritual control of the physical. I believe the time will come when telepathy will be the universal and commonly demonstrated fact, when mind will communicate with mind without the aid of audible speech in all the daily intercourse of life. I believe that telepathy has even now been proven to be a fact, and when individual mentalities develop sufficiently in strength, men will be able to read each other's thought like the printed page.

"The vital principle of the persisting mentality is its harmony with the creative Power of the universe. It must be developed in harmony with the divine Creator or it will disintegrate and disappear. The creative Power of the universe is loving, beneficent and kind, and the persisting entity must be in accord, or it never will reach immortality.

"One of the most inharmonious notes in the individual mentality is the presence of fear,— fear of punishment, fear of consequences from the law, fear of revenge from an angry and wrathful God, fear of the great judgment, and fear of the eternal hereafter. Yet fear has never saved a soul,

and never will. No ego reaches heaven through fear of any other place. No saved soul knows fear of anything. Salvation is the casting out of fear and the entering in of love. The way of salvation is the way of harmony with the great Love which rules at the world's heart.

"When we live right from choice, and do right from desire, we are on the way to salvation, and no other pathway leads to immortality and eternal happiness. The notion of an angry God is one of the hideous superstitions of the ages, which has been handed down from that darkened mental time in which were born the creeds of fear and wrath and revenge which have terrorized the souls of men through all the years. God is Love and Light and Happiness, and neither fear nor anger nor sorrow nor care can come into his existence. The saved soul will be filled with the sunlight of love and peace and happiness, and no goblin shape, whether called God or fiend or devil, which knows or holds fear or wrath or revenge, can come into the kingdom where the loving God reigns supreme."

Just at that moment the old clock on the stairs rang out the hour of midnight, and obedient to its summons the music ceased upstairs, and soon the dancing feet came gaily down, their owners flushed and happy with the exercise and the pleasure of the dance.

"Mercy!" said Kate. "Look at this company of sober faces. One would think that you had been holding some sort of a religious service down

here to counteract the gaiety upstairs. Now, Uncle Jack, honestly, do you not believe that our meeting upstairs was really just as religious as your gathering down here, even if we did make a little more noise about it?"

"Yes, my dear," I said, "I really do believe that your occupation was just as profitable to you as ours was to us, for I honestly believe that the only way in which we can draw close to the divine Happiness which rules the world is through our own happiness and joy, and that person comes nearest living the life the Creator intended who finds the most innocent pleasure and happiness in life. If happiness is to be the condition in the After-Time, we might well make every effort to find it here and now, but we must also realize that there are serious things in life, as well as dancing and music and laughter, and while it is not necessary to be too solemn about it, yet we must consider the sober side of life also. There should be times for music and dancing and gaiety, but there should also be times for looking at life seriously, and earnestly trying to learn the lessons which the ages have to teach."

Soon our guests had all departed, and once more Kate and I sat down together before the fire for our customary good-night talk together.

"My dear," I said, "I am face to face with one of those situations in life where I wish to console a friend in trouble, and I hardly know how to go about it.

"I have just received a letter from a young married woman friend of mine, telling me of the death of her little five-year-old daughter. I am hesitating about answering it, for what words can avail a mother who has lost her child? I knew her before she was married, a bright, happy, joyous, beautiful girl, full of the sunshine of youth and health and the happiness of dreams for the future. I saw her happily married to a good man, and as far as I know, all of her bright dreams were being realized. I saw her pass close to the valley of the shadow when her baby girl was born, but fearlessly, confidently going down into the dimness of uncertainty for the sake of that dear soul which the laws of creation had entrusted to her. I saw her will to live drawing her back into health and strength after the ordeal had passed, that brave young mother who trusted in the good law that she and the babe would not be parted then, but live together.

"I saw her often during the first years of the child's life, tenderly, carefully, thankfully doing her best, as she saw the light, to shield the child from harm or misfortune, and I saw her joy and delight in watching its growth and development and its constantly opening mentality. I know her happiness in possession, and have heard her plan for its future, their future, she and the child together.

"And now there has stepped into her paradise this angel whom we do not care to see, and the

sunshine of her life has disappeared. Now, what can I say to this weeping mother, out of the depths of my confident philosophy of life, which will give her consolation in this hour of sorrow?

"She grieves for the loss of the dear physical baby form, which she longs to hold again in her loving arms, and she wants to hear again its sweet voice calling her by name. Nothing can quite fill this void. Nothing can take the place of this physical contact and companionship which can exist henceforth only in her memory. Her grief is a physical cry for a physical experience, and even the dearest and sweetest memory can never take its place.

"Shall I tell her that it is my firm and confident belief that this dear soul whom she has so loved was attracted to her in the first place because of congenial things; that the soul which inhabited that baby body was drawn to her because of love for her before that body ever saw the light of day; that a mutual love between her own pure soul and that of the child unborn brought the congenial soul to her in the beginning, and that same love will perchance bring it back again to her, because of this added, loving, physical life experience together?

"Shall I tell her that I believe that the short experience of physical life which her child has just had will not keep it long out of the physical, and if another child of love is born to her, this same soul may be the one to inhabit the new body?

"Suppose that she believed that this was the law of creative life, would she not find consolation in the thought that she would again in reality hold this same dear soul in her loving physical embrace, that this soul whose physical life experience had been cut short in consequence of some broken physical law,— which was unavoidable, perhaps, under the circumstances because of ignorance of the law's operation,— will stay close to her, and if opportunity offers, will come back into the physical life with her again? How doubly and dearly would she love and guard this other physical form, with that belief in her heart and that thought in her mind. How often would she see traces and glimpses of the dear child which has left her now in the one which comes back by the loving processes of the Creator's beneficent plan.

"Shall I tell her that the baby form has not been taken from her because of any special dispensation of Providence, or interference by the Creator, for the Lord giveth, and the Lord taketh away, only through his constant laws, which ever were and ever will be the same in their operation?

"Shall I tell her that this dear baby is not far from her now, and is full of the sweet memory of its life with her? I often wonder if a baby does not remember, before it begins to realize its new physical life, something of its past experience and the existence from which it came, or is just

coming. As I look into a baby's questioning eyes, there seems to me to lie in their depths the wisdom of the ages, as though that soul, if it could manage the new physical vehicle to its will, could and would tell us the secrets which all humanity so longs to know. But the new brain is only developed into functioning power by its own physical experience, so it cannot respond to the life experience of some other brain now disintegrated and dissolved. It is well that this is so, for a soul would only be hampered by physical ability to remember a former life experience. To act quickly it must have results, the condensation or product, of former experience. So that the wise scheme calls a halt after enough life experience at any one time, and then takes time to work that experience up into faculties and qualities or results for its use in another life.

"Then, can I not say to this sorrowing mother that she should not grieve as those without hope, for nothing good which has come into her life will ever again be entirely lost to her, and the dear soul which came into her care through the great law of attraction by that same law will never get beyond her possible reach?"

CHAPTER XI

The month of December is here again, Evelyn, and this is my last talk with you, for I have said, I think, what I wanted to say in the beginning, and if you have followed me through all these pages, as I love to think you have, you will be able to see the mental attitude of a mind which is trying to stand alone upon its own foundation.

It lacks but a few days of Christmas, and I have a letter from Philip saying that he will be here on Christmas Day. He has done well in the past year, and is gaining recognition as a composer, and musicians predict a bright future for him. Kate does not mention him often, but I know that he is constantly in her thoughts, and when she told me recently that Harry had proposed to her, but that she could not accept him, I knew well where her heart was centered. He has accepted a position in the city here, and asks me if he may occupy the little house again as he did before. There is no reason why Kate should not marry him if she loves him, for this is her home, and I have enough to make her comfortable. If Philip marries her, I can persuade them to stay here, while some other man might take her away, so you can see that I am not altogether unselfish

in my desires. She has so grown into my heart and fits so perfectly into my life and home that it would be very hard for me to get along without her, and I hope that she will stay here while I live.

I am sitting in front of the fire in my easy chair, and Kate is at the piano, playing and singing softly, as she loves to do, and as I let my thoughts wander back over the years that I have passed here in this dear old house, so full of pleasant memories, I feel that God has been very good to me, and that his loving scheme of life is a very perfect one. The sorrows and trials of the past are few and faint and far between to-night, while the pleasures and blessings and joys are many and clear and bright in my memory. There were some hardships and troubles in my boyhood days, I suppose, and some unpleasant things, and it is likely that unusual pleasures were comparatively uncommon, but as I remember it now, that life was a very happy one. I have forgotten most of the sorrows and difficulties, or if I remember them at all, time has drawn such a veil over them that they appear very insignificant and trivial and indistinct, but the joy of life, of health and strength and the happy things are as clear to me as yesterday.

I remember my mother's sweet face, and her tender, loving regard for me. I remember the wonderful things which under her skillful fingers the great oven in the kitchen produced, and which I received with a hungry boy's keen delight. I

remember her sympathy in all my boyhood woes, which she never laughed at for the trifles which they were. I remember the old well with its windlass and bucket, and the clear, cold water which we used to draw from the "northeast corner," and which afforded a thirst-quenching drink not to be excelled by any nectar quaffed by gods or men. I remember the cool, shady depths of the woods, and the flowers which grew in the sunny places. I remember the singing of the birds, the robins, the orioles and the thrushes, and the meadow-lark's soft call in the evening. I remember the fields of waving grain, across which the sunlight played and danced.

I remember lying flat upon my back in the fragrant clover fields, with my old straw hat over my face, and peeping through the rents where the straw had parted at the fleecy clouds, white and purple and gray, which chased each other through a heaven of azure blue. I remember the pure summer air filled with the perfume of innumerable flowers and a multitude of sweet scented blossoms. I remember the little lake and the swimming place, shaded and secure from prying eyes. I remember the sleepy drone of the numberless bees and the cheerful chirp of the cricket on the hearthstone in the evening. I remember the meals my mother used to serve, which far surpassed in deliciousness any which the finest hotel in the land can boast of to-day.

I remember the winter joys of skating and

coasting and the sleigh rides in the big "bobs" with the long sleigh box packed with straw, in which nestled the happy boys and girls, well covered up with buffalo robes, for there were real buffalo robes in those days. I remember the parties at the different homes, at which we played games in happy joyousness, and ate suppers which kings might envy.

I remember the pleasures of my later life, the dear, beautiful, loving wife, and the joyous child, who filled the old home with sunshine. I remember the music and song and happiness of those perfect days which could not be improved upon in paradise. I remember with joy that she was happy then, and there lingers in my mind no trouble which ever came between us. And now her counterpart sits at the piano and sings the dear, old, familiar love songs in her voice, until my heart is filled with the melody of a world made beautiful. The pleasant things are all fresh and clear in my memory, but the troubles or sorrows, where are they, for if they existed then, I do not remember them now.

And so the beautiful and beneficent scheme of life works out always and forever, and the trials which are past fade out of remembrance, while the joy abideth forever. And in the loving scheme also is strength given us according to our needs, and if we obey the laws, nothing will ever come to us which we have not the strength given us to bear. The very worst of our troubles is the an-

ticipation of them, which is the breaking of the law of trust which we should have in our Creator. God's care, through his laws, reaches everywhere and covers everything which he has created, and the everlasting arms are around every creature in his universe.

So I believe that we cannot get away from God, for no bottomless hell was ever conceived by the mind of man so deep that God's love could not reach down and lift out the repentant sinner who is struggling to throw off his burden of sin and come back into obedience. God's mercy has no end, and the spirit of God strives with man as long as there is any good left in his soul to answer.

And now, Little Lady of my dreams, my story is told, and I must bid you farewell, but before I do so, let me whisper in your pretty ear, in strictest confidence, a secret which you must not tell except to Scott, for I would have you keep no secrets from him. The story I have told you is real truth, my dear, and if you knew the way to find us, you would find that Kate and I and the old house and the rest are all real, and this tale I have related is the real story of our lives, just as I have told it to you. Only the names are changed, but if I knew your present address, Evelyn, I would extend to you and your brave boy-husband a cordial invitation to come and make us a visit, and see that it is all true, for maybe you are real also yourself, my dear. Who knows?

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS
00012673747